

Plans praised

A new white paper on learning disabilities, pledging £561.5m funding over the next three years, has been wholeheartedly welcomed by disability groups.

Plans include abolishing long-stay hospitals in favour of homes in the community by 2004, and dramatically improving advocacy services that help learning disabled people speak up for themselves.

*Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century** was launched at the end of March. It is the first major policy document on learning disabilities for 30 years. All promises will be implemented by 2006.

Disability groups have hailed the paper as a great step forward and a positive commitment to better choices and opportunities for learning disabled people.

It was drawn up after consultation with user groups, and includes plans to create a learning disability task force to

advise the Government, as well as an implementation support team to push for changes at local level.

Other pledges include investing at least £1.3m a year for the next three years in advocacy services, and putting £750,000 over the same period into developing a national learning disability information centre and helpline in partnership with the charity Mencap.

People with learning disabilities will all be registered with a GP, and will have their own health action plan to ensure their health needs are met by June 2005. Health facilitators will be appointed to support them.

Michael Brookstein, chair of People First, an organisation run by people with learning disabilities, said: "It was

about time the Government did something to make life better for people with learning disabilities and we are delighted to have been part of making it happen. We hope it is the start of good things to come.

"We are pleased the strategy says that self-advocacy is very important. We think the Government has realised that we are the real experts on our lives. It is good that people with learning disabilities are being listened to."

Mencap trustee Simon Cramp, who is learning disabled, said: "This is great stuff. The Government has actually listened and made it a priority. This is something we have been pushing for."

*£15.90, tel: 0845 702 3474, e-mail: book.orders@theso.co.uk



Care charge concerns: Lord (Jack) Ashley (centre) joined a demo in March against proposed methods of charging for care and the way the Independent Living Fund operates. Protesters believe that linking care charges to earnings discourages disabled people from working. See DN, February. JAMIE FACER

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Bad news at SIA

The UK's leading spinal injuries charity is making "severe" cutbacks in a bid to stave off a potential £200,000 deficit in the next 12 months.

The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) has already frozen recruitment in some posts and has put projects where funding is not guaranteed on hold.

The SIA counselling service, which currently operates three hours a day, will face cuts.

SIA wants to continue its national Personal Assistance scheme, which provides carers, though this has been cut back along with the peer support service. A new way of providing this service is being developed.

Mary Ann Tyrrell, acting chief executive, refused to answer questions about the possibility of redundancies or staff beginning to work part-time.

But she said: "SIA prides itself on its expertise in the field of spinal cord injury and will, as ever, find ways to

respond to members' needs."

Services were being reviewed in any case, she added.

Simon Barnes, head of communications at the charity Spinal Research, said: "There are an estimated 50,000 spinally injured people in the country and the majority are unemployed. There are a lot of paralysed people out there who are finding it difficult to reintegrate into society and may be suffering depression and other effects of spinal cord injury."

"The need for an organisation like SIA to reach out and offer support could never be greater. It is very bad news. It smacks of government funding not being spread far enough."

Meanwhile, the SIA has appointed Paul Smith as its new executive director. Mr Smith, who is spinally injured, will start the job in May. He is currently chief executive of independent advocacy agency Pohwer in Hertfordshire.

Stop press

Lords' cannabis move

The House of Lords has recommended legalisation of cannabis for medicinal use.

A report by the Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, *Therapeutic Uses of Cannabis*,* said: "Patients with severe conditions such as multiple sclerosis are being denied the right to make informed choices about their medication."

*www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld/ldsc/tech.htm
See also page 6.

Tories oppose SEN bill

The Conservatives have challenged the Government's Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill, opposing its second Commons reading.

Conservative education spokesperson Theresa May MP claimed the bill did not make the child's needs a priority and could lead to the closure of special schools. See also page 2.

Strong case for special schools

Disabled pupils could be harmed by an overemphasis on mainstream education, a former government education adviser has said.

Dr John Marks said children with some conditions like autism and Down's syndrome might benefit more from special school education, and criticised the "inclusion or else" message

in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill currently being debated by MPs.

Different disabilities should be put into categories with recommendations for the most suitable type of education, he added.

At a conference organised by the Centre for Policy Studies in March he said: "We need to be more specific in what we do to

help those with serious special educational needs. The case for special schools is considerably stronger now, and many parents prefer them."

A government spokesman said having categories could remove the focus from individual children's needs.

• A government-backed report by the charity Scope has shown

all pupils benefit from inclusion of disabled children in mainstream education.

*Within Reach 3** found increasing access improved all students' behaviour and disabled pupils' academic achievement in most schools.

*£15 for organisations/£5 for individuals, tel: 020 7619 7341, www.teachers.org.uk

In brief

DRC awareness drive

The Disability Rights Commission has launched a new poster campaign and three new leaflets*, including one on the DRC's work and one on the Disability Conciliation Service. *Free, tel: 08457 622633, fax: 08457 622611, minicom: 08457 622644.

Fall campaign

One in 12 people over the age of 75 will go to an accident and emergency department as a result of a fall at home, new statistics from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) have shown.

The DTI recently launched a campaign aimed at reducing the number of falls.

2001 Census offers Braille, Large Print and Audiotape material

People with a visual impairment will be offered Braille and Large Print options to ensure they can be counted in this April's Census of Population.

The 10-yearly Census, due to take place on Sunday 29 April 2001, is a count of everyone who is usually resident in Britain. Census forms containing around 40 questions will be hand-delivered to every address during April, and must be posted back as soon as possible after Census Day itself.

Following consultation with the RNIB and other bodies, the questions and instructions on the Census form will be made available in both Braille and Large Print to anyone needing them. People in Wales will be offered these materials in both English and Welsh.

The materials can be obtained from the Census Enumerator when he or she calls to deliver the form, or from a special national telephone helpline which opened on 1 April.

Audio and video tapes about the Census are also available for use by groups. For a free copy, contact the Community Liaison Unit, Office for National Statistics, email: community.liaison@ons.gov.uk or tel: 01329 813066.

Individuals can obtain the audiotape from their local library or special interest group or by calling the helpline on 0845 301 2001.



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www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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LINCOLN CHRONICLE

Walkies: Retired vicar David Ensor's new dog Susie was trained by the National Canine Defence League to be comfortable walking beside his electric wheelchair near his home in Lincolnshire.

'Poor' benefit assessment service

Over 1,000 people a month are turned away from medical assessments for disability benefits because of overbooking, a report by the National Audit Office has revealed.

The task of conducting medical assessments for Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance was given to the SEMA Group in 1998 to save money. The report, *Medical*

*Assessment of Incapacity and Disability Benefits**, said disabled people get poor service because of this cost-cutting.

David Davies, chair of the Committee of Public Accounts, said: "Serious concerns must be raised over the lack of improvement in the quality of medical assessments."

*£10.50, tel: 0845 702 3474, e-mail: book.orders@theso.co.uk

Key areas ignored

Campaigners have warned that key issues have been either rejected or put off by the Government in plans to improve the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

In its response to the recommendations of the Disability Rights Taskforce which reported in 1999, the Government has made some major changes.

These include extending the DDA to cover police and fire-fighters, counting cancer and HIV as disabilities from diagnosis, and requiring firms with fewer than 15 employees to comply with the DDA from 2004.

Employment tribunals will be able to order that a person sacked because of their disability should be given their job back.

Despite this, campaigners feel major issues have been ignored. Requests that employers should only be able to inquire about a job applicant's disability in limited circumstances were rejected.

The Government said the risk for employers of "simply asking the wrong question at the wrong time" was "too great."

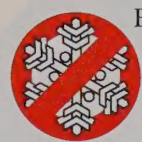
Disability employment con-

sultant Nick Goss said that protected the employer rather than the employee.

DaRT, which campaigns for accessible transport, welcomed the introduction of a code of practice for airlines but criticised the Government's delay in setting a date by which train carriages would have to be accessible.

DaRT director Sean Thompson said it was "a big hole" and could lead to a situation where platforms had to be accessible by 2004, yet people would not be able to get on the trains.

'Only 4,000' die of cold



Extending winter fuel payments to severely disabled people under 60 was slapped down again in the Lords last month, although Lord (Jack) Ashley claimed the Government was shaken by the strength of the all-party support shown and would come round eventually.

"No government can afford to ignore that kind of all-party feeling," he said.

Replying to his question, Social Security Minister Baroness Hollis said the Government was targeting pensioners because 50 per cent are fuel poor (spending more than ten per cent of their income on

heating) compared to four per cent of severely disabled people. "For younger disabled people, disability benefits are available in recognition of their extra costs."

Lord (Alf) Morris mentioned DN's "disturbing findings" of people having to sleep downstairs, skimp on food and stuff windows with newspaper to keep warm.

Baroness Hollis said that "something like 50,000" people died of hypothermia between December and April last year, 45,000 of them pensioners. Only 4,000 were aged 0 to 60. "This suggests that severely disabled people do not suffer at the acute end of winter cold."

She costed an extension of payments at £200-250m a year, contradicting the £150m figure given in October.

Meanwhile, in the Commons, Social Security Minister Jeff Rooker took Andrew George MP to task: "He is not living in the real world if he believes he could confine an extension of the winter fuel allowance to selected, targeted groups of disabled people."

Commons motion 147 has been signed by 137 MPs and DN survey forms are still coming in to swell the 5,000 supporters.

DN editor Mary Wilkinson has written to Baroness Hollis suggesting she meet some severely disabled campaigners.

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FRONT COVER: LEN ARCHER'S WINNING HOLIDAY SNAP, SEE PAGE 26

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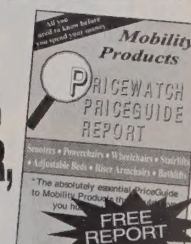
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Benefit blow

New cuts to disability benefits come into effect in April, just weeks after the Government's budget promise of extra cash for working disabled people.

From April, new Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants with a personal pension of more than £85 a week will lose 50 pence for every pound of pension they receive above the £85 threshold. And new claimants who have not paid National Insurance contributions in the previous three years will no longer be able to claim IB. The changes are the result of the controversial Welfare Reform and Pensions Act.

However, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced in the March Budget that the Disabled Persons Tax Credit (DPTC) will increase by £5 a week from June, guaranteeing many disabled workers a family income of £250.

VAT exemption was also

extended to vehicles adapted for wheelchair users who do not sit in their wheelchair in the vehicle.

Scope welcomed the extension of the DPTC but was disappointed that the Government did not extend the Disability Income Guarantee (DIG) to people on the middle rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The DIG, which starts in April, guarantees £142 to single people and £186 for couples.

Steve Winyard, head of policy at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, said: "A concerted campaign to end disability poverty is just not on the Government's agenda. It is high time it was."

He called on the Government to extend winter fuel payments to severely disabled people under 60, and raise the level of IB, DLA and Attendance Allowance.



Braille boon: The Co-op has become the first shop in the UK to introduce Braille information on medicine packaging. Attending the launch were (left to right) Lord (Alf) Morris, DRC commissioner Colin Low, blind radio presenter Peter White and Secretary of State for Education David Blunkett.

Website aims high

A new disability website, dubbed the biggest social venture since the *Big Issue*, is to be launched on 18 April.

The website youareable.com, which will carry news stories provided by DN, is the brainchild of wheelchair user Joe Rajko



(below left) from Leeds. Rajko, 38, won £1m worth of start-up funding for the business after winning last year's Channel 4 competition, the *Emillionaire Show*.

The site will carry news, transport, charity and product information, and a dating service. It aims for one million visitors in its first year.

See also page 15.

Scope rethinks service cuts

Scope has backtracked on plans to axe services to disabled adults in the community through its fieldworkers.

An angry response from service users, staff and members has led to a rethink and Scope has called meetings to find alternative ways forward.

The charity had intended to concentrate on a new fieldwork service for children with cerebral palsy. This was part of its new "vision" focusing on children, education, employment for disabled people and daily living for adults.

But as Lise Horsley, the parent of a young disabled man, told Scope chief executive Richard Brewster, parents of disabled adults become exhausted after constant battles for services.

She said: "It is at that stage that Scope should throw in all the help that they can."

Eric Homewood, chair of the South East Partnership Area said a number of proposals had been put forward by an alternative options working group. These included allowing Scope's local partnership committees to

plan services outside the "vision", local partnership teams to raise money independently and increasing staff for adult services.

Scope chief executive Richard Brewster said: "We asked members and staff to suggest alternative ways that Scope could still afford to directly support adults in the community whilst balancing its finances."

The charity's executive council will choose feasible options and consult further before the plans come into effect from July.

Wheelchair funds need boost

The Government has frozen funding for electric-powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs (EPIOCs) for three years, despite the service needing nearly double the current grant, campaigners have claimed.

Equipment campaigns group Empower is lobbying the Government to allocate an extra £7m a year to providing EPIOCs because no extra money has been given to the

scheme over the past few years, it says.

Empower's demands are backed by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign (MDC).

MDC executive director Tony Lee said: "We are finding that there are significant waiting lists for EPIOC chairs, and on occasions people are not even invited for an assessment by a physiotherapist because there are no chairs available for months and even years."

"The Government has funded the same amount, £8m, for the last three years and there is still significant demand out there."

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the Government was committed to providing EPIOCs and had given continued funding.

"We are aware of their popularity and are willing to hold constructive discussions with Empower," he added.

course that will train disabled artists in self-employment, arts management and business skills. It is the first course of its kind in the UK.

NWDA, tel: 0151 707 1733, fax: 0151 708 9355.

Correction

In "Be safer on your scooter" (DN, March) we should not have said that Miss Margaret Godfree "accidentally rammed" a lady in a supermarket. She only "touched" her.

In brief

Drug warning

People taking the drug Arava for severe forms of rheumatoid arthritis should contact their GP, the Department of Health has said. The drug, whose composition has recently been altered to contain a new chemical, was found to be a factor in the deaths of nine people from liver failure.

Job website

A one-stop-shop jobs and careers website that is fully accessible for blind and partially-sighted people has been set up by the Government. The site contains job vacancies from all the UK's job centres.

www.worktrain.gov.uk

Arts cash

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Car wait 'appalling'

Disabled people will still have to wait up to three years for an adapted car when the waiting list for a government fund that pays for adaptations reopens in April.

Motability, the charity which leases cars to disabled people, claims the Government is not putting enough money into the Mobility Equipment Fund (MEF). The fund, which has been closed for seven months, pays for adaptations for people with severe disabilities who lease a car from Motability.

The charity runs the MEF on behalf of the Government.

Motability said the 220 people on the waiting list will still have to wait up to three years to have their applications processed when the MEF reopens.

The Government has pledged extra funding of around £5m in each of the next three years.

But Motability's grants director Mike Richards said that was not enough, and the charity had to use its own trust fund to top up the money. This

year, the Tenth Anniversary Trust (TAT) will give £2m to the MEF.

Wheelchair user Carol Hili applied to the MEF last August.

She said: "I shouldn't have to rely on my family to take me to and from work every day, out shopping or to hospital appointments. It's an appalling state of affairs."

The Government disputed Mr Richards' claim that the TAT fund was not designed to fund adaptations along with the government grants.

Without hot water since Christmas

A disabled woman has been without heating or hot water since Christmas after asking a government grants body to help fix her boiler.

Deborah Green, 43, of Westbrook in Kent, asked the Eaga Partnership, which gives out heating improvement grants on behalf of the Government, to repair or replace the boiler when it broke down at Christmas. An engineer had still not visited her by the time *DN* went to press, but the organisation has now promised immediate action.

Ms Green said: "We've been using blow heaters, but I am doubly incontinent so washing

and personal hygiene is more difficult because it is so cold. And I'm having to keep boiling kettles."

While the delay for Ms Green was due to a mix-up with a contractor which had been asked to visit her, an Eaga spokesman admitted there was a national shortage of heating engineers and in the south-east this could mean delays of six months.

"We are training 800 engineers over the next year," he said.

But he urged disabled people not to be put off as they could be entitled to grants of up to £2,000 to help with heating improvements.

Eaga, tel: 0800 3166015.

Most wheelchair users' homes found unsuitable

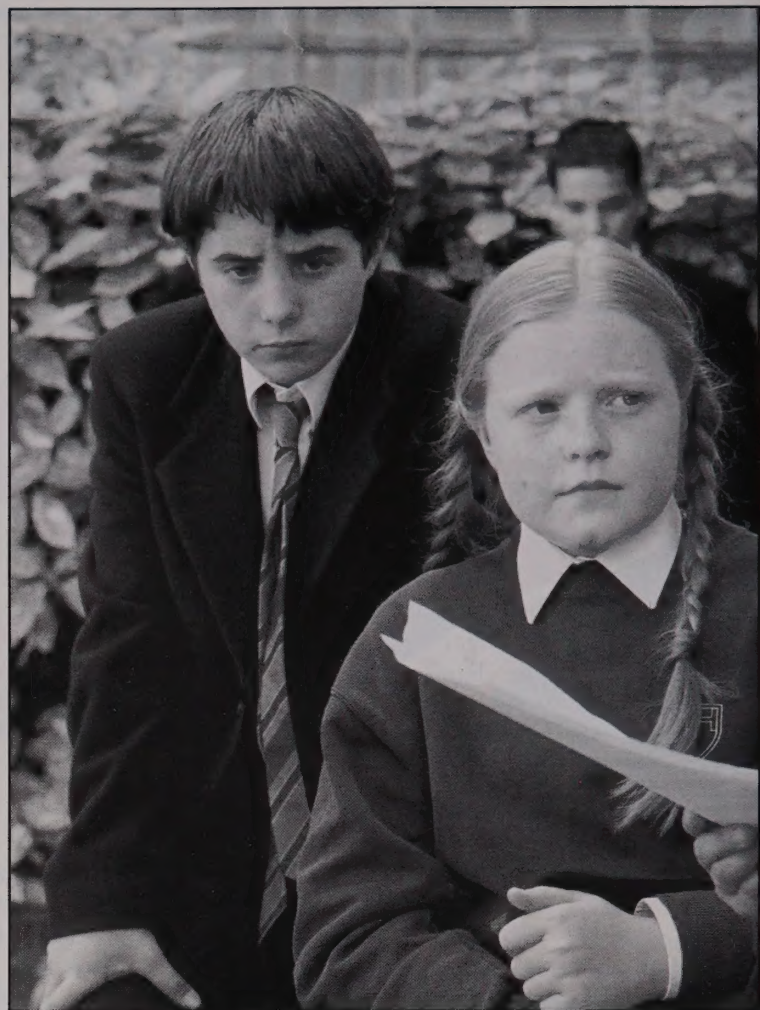
Most wheelchair users are living in homes that have not been adapted to their needs, a new report has shown.

*Pathways to Accessible Housing**, published in March, looked at over 600 people living in Southwark, Kingston upon Hull and Suffolk. It found that 40 per cent of respondents were not happy with their home. The most common reason was unsuitable design.

Researchers found there was no standard definition of accessible housing, and only two of the nine councils examined had records of how many of their accessible properties were occupied by people with mobility difficulties.

As a result of the research, the Papworth Trust and Habinteg Housing Association have launched a guide for local authorities on assessing the need for wheelchair-accessible housing in their area.

*£15 for research/£30 for guide, tel: 020 7822 8700, e-mail: info@habinteg.org.uk



Asperger's on air: BBC1's *Grange Hill* began a storyline on Asperger's syndrome in March. Martin, a year-seven pupil, finds out that he has the condition with help from his friend Kathy, who finds out about Asperger's on the internet.

Swiss take cannabis lead



The Swiss government has announced plans to legalise cannabis.

The move would allow people to use the drug and permit a certain number of shops to be tolerated.

The plans now need to be approved by the Swiss parliament.

Meanwhile, a criminal law expert has called on the UK Government to ensure that cannabis derivatives currently under medical trial are legalised before any law comes into effect limiting the rights of defendants to jury trials.

Recent cases have seen juries refusing to convict disabled

people who take cannabis for medical purposes.

Malcolm Fowler, chairman of the Law Society's criminal law committee, fears that moves to restrict jury trials could lead to magistrates convicting these people.

He said: "This is just the sort of issue where a jury can claim to have a legitimacy and feel the pulse of the public at large."

Magistrates might not feel they had the power to send such messages to the Government, he added.

Medical trials are under way into the benefits of medicinal cannabis, but legalisation could be some years away.

Dwayne – dob 18.06.1992

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Dwayne has a severe learning disability and developmental delay, and he therefore functions on the level of a younger child. Since his foster placement he has progressed considerably in his social and communication skills.

Dwayne prefers a clear routine at home and this enables him to be more independent and confident of what he is doing. He can take care of his personal needs, and needs minimal help with dressing/undressing.

Dwayne enjoys all family activities and outings including trips to the park, swimming, walks and to places of interest. At home he likes cars, cuddly toys, looking at books and listening to stories.

Dwayne responds well to his foster family and has been able to form positive attachments to them. He is affectionate and rewarding to care for.

Dwayne attends a Special Needs School. He is well settled and is beginning to make progress. He is physically healthy.

Dwayne needs an adoptive or permanent foster family, either a couple or a single female carer, who lives outside of Luton and South Bedfordshire.

A prospective family or carer will need to provide time, patience and understanding to encourage Dwayne's independence and participation in activities, whilst recognising that outside the home he is a vulnerable child who requires close supervision.

Dwayne is subject to a Full Care Order and there is likely to be limited direct contact with his birth mother and siblings.

For further details please contact:
Linda Gill, Social Worker, Adoption and Family Finding Team on 01525 840543.



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In brief

Water guides

Water watchdog Ofwat has produced guidelines for water firms on the services they should provide for disabled customers. Advice includes ensuring vulnerable users are notified of water quality incidents and interruptions to the supply, and methods of distributing information.

Correction

Dr Paul Darke points out that he left Leonard Cheshire on 3 October and set up his website after that (*DN*, March). Apologies for any embarrassment caused.



Step into elderly's shoes

Nurses and other staff at Cheltenham General Hospital got a taste of mobility problems with the help of a bit of popcorn in their shoes in February.

The sessions, aimed at raising awareness of the problems of ageing, also involved special

simulator spectacles to show staff what it was like to have cataracts.

Staff wore rubber gloves with their thumbs taped down and tried opening envelopes to experience arthritis-like problems. Ear muffs helped simulate hearing impairments.

DRC man in row over rights talk

A row has erupted over the fact that a member of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is to give a lecture on 3 April at City University entitled *Have Disability Rights Gone Too Far?*

Colin Low, a DRC commissioner, said his talk will discuss whether the rights movement has overshadowed and neglected other aspects of the needs of disabled people, such as the need for support services in the community and benefits issues.

Mr Low, a senior research fellow at City and chairman of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, defended his decision to give the lecture, which he

said would "consider whether some rebalancing of perspectives may be overdue."

He added: "I don't think that because one is a DRC commissioner or has any other role that one should be required to force one's ideas into an intellectual straitjacket."

"Monolithic ideas such as a rights agenda can't capture all the interests of disabled people."

Rachel Hurst, director of Disability Awareness in Action, said: "I am concerned about his accountability as a commissioner for disability rights when he is questioning whether those rights are really needed."

Bullied on a daily basis

Most people with learning disabilities have been harassed in the past year, and just under a third were bullied on a daily basis, a new report has revealed.

Research by Mencap and Values Into Action uncovered the statistics, published in *Just Gateways?** in February.

It found two-thirds of learning disabled people were bullied more than once a month, and that while 45 per cent were called names, just under a third were threatened and nearly a quarter were physically attacked.

They were not taken seriously by the police when they reported incidents, because 80 per cent of police officers questioned for the research said they had not been given any specific training in dealing with disabled people.

Richard Kramer, head of campaigns at Mencap, said: "This is a big issue. People can't live independent lives if they have to face harassment every day."

*£8.50, tel: 020 7729 5436, e-mail: publications@viauk.org

Suicides 'avoidable'

Around 1,300 suicides by people with mental health problems could have been prevented during the last five years through improved NHS care, a report has found.

The confidential report by Professor Louis Appleby of Manchester University found 17 per cent of suicides by psychiatric patients were preventable.

It recommends that collapsible frames on showers and beds in wards should be removed to prevent people from hanging themselves. It also calls for better follow-up of people leaving hospital.

Health Minister John

Hutton said the Government was already tackling the recommendations.

Meanwhile, a report by Mental health charity MIND, *Shock Treatment**, showed that three-quarters of people with mental health problems given controversial electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) were not given information about side effects before treatment. It found that 84 per cent suffered side effects like memory loss and confusion.

Margaret Pedler, MIND's head of policy development, said: "This report confirms many of our worst fears. We

believe there should be a nationally agreed information leaflet and a legal requirement for independent advocacy."

• A government report has found terms like "psycho" and "schizo" are used regularly by young people to abuse those with mental health problems.

*Tomorrow's Minds***, published in March, found that while two-thirds of 16 to 24-year-olds thought racist abuse was unacceptable, only half that number felt the same about derogatory terms for mental health service users.

*£5, www.mind.org.uk

**www.doh.gov.uk



Top of the class: Ten children won AOL Child of Resolution awards, supported by internet service provider AOL UK, in March in recognition of their continuing in education despite disability, illness or injury.

Strong advocate of improved provision

Rob McLean writes Scope is saddened by the death of Richard Gamble in February.

Richard, who had cerebral palsy, was officially involved

with the work of the charity for almost 20 years and had been a member of its executive council since 1998.

He was a strong advocate of

improved provision for disabled people. His contribution to the lives of disabled people will be missed nationally, locally and particularly within Scope.

In brief

Care awards

Service users and professionals can nominate carers and colleagues for the Health and Social Care Awards, organised by the Department of Health, until 20 April. *Entry forms are available in alternative formats, tel: 0121 777 1001.*

Asylum seeker help

Signposts, a guide for asylum seekers, has been produced by the National Information Forum. It has a section for disabled asylum seekers. £2.75 *voluntary groups*/£3.75 *statutory and professional organisations*, tel: 020 7402 6681.



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Rush and push: Ian Kershaw, who has cerebral palsy, set a new world record by being pushed 241 miles in 24 hours to raise money for the Maryport branch of the Cumbria Cerebral Palsy Society (CCPS) in an Otto Bock wheelchair. CCPS, tel: 01228 527796.

Mencap looks ahead

Increases in membership and the number of people using supported living projects are among plans set out for the next five years by learning disability charity Mencap.

The charity's new five-year plan *Choice, Opportunity and Respect* was written in consultation with learning disabled people.

It includes plans to focus on children, people with profound and multiple disabilities, older people, those from ethnic communities and people with challenging behaviour.

Mencap wants to increase

individual membership from 15,000 to 25,000. This will include learning disabled people, parents and carers. It aims to increase the number of supported living clients from 300 to 1,000, and boost fundraising from £8m to £12m.

It will also develop more community-based, day activity services.

But Andrew Lee, director of learning disability group People First, said learning disabled people should have greater control.

He claimed parents still had too much say in the charity and their interests were different

from those of learning disabled people.

He said: "It can either be excellent at representing parents or give full control to people with learning disabilities. But it cannot do both."

The charity said that learning disabled people had already been given more say in the way it is run because at least one third of its national assembly must be learning disabled.

Viv Fox, national director of learning disability group CHANGE, said: "They are moving in the right direction, but they are not quite there."

Hearing aid users face VAT burden

The Government is deciding whether to charge full VAT for the supply of private hearing aids, which can already cost £2,500.

This follows a European Court decision in 1999 which means that VAT can be charged on the service involved in supplying products as well as the product itself.

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) warned that this could affect 180,000 people who buy hearing aids privately every year.

James Strachan, RNID chief executive, said: "Far too many people, in desperation, are having to go into debt to buy hearing aids privately. To add to this a 10-15 per cent tax burden is astonishing."

The Government said it had not yet made a decision. But it will go ahead with plans to charge VAT on the service involved in supplying spectacles, though not on eye tests.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind said this would add £10 to the cost of a pair of glasses.

Enjoyed DN this month?
Why not order it from your local supermarket so you can pick it up with your shopping every month?

News review

DN rounds up news covered in the mainstream media over the last few weeks

DNR guidelines

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has welcomed new guidelines on resuscitation. Issued by the British Medical Association and Royal College of Nursing, the guidelines call on doctors to discuss patients' wishes, after revelations that doctors were putting "do not resuscitate" (DNR) notices on disabled patients' notes without them or their family knowing.

DRC chairman Bert Massie said: "This is often because medical professionals make negative assumptions about disabled people's quality of life."

Parkinson's problems

Research involving implants of foetal cells into people with Parkinson's disease has revealed serious side effects. Five patients are now unable to control their movements and there is no prospect of reversing the problems.

The cells were implanted into the brains of people with Parkinson's to help them produce dopamine, a brain chemical involved in movement. But the cells started overproducing, leaving the patients with extreme side effects.

Joint action

Health Secretary Alan Milburn announced the building of 29 new hospitals at a cost of £3.1bn. There will also be 16 new fast-track surgery centres for non-emergency operations. Mr Milburn also announced that, by 2009, the NHS will have 12,000 more consultants and 9,000 more physiotherapists.

Knee warning

People given an artificial knee which the Medical Devices Agency warned should no longer be fitted because of poor performance are to get legal aid to sue. Seven clients of the law firm Lees and Partners have got legal aid to sue for being fitted with the Accord (Johnson Elloy) Total Knee Replacement System. Around 1,500 of the knees were distributed in the UK.

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DN is sponsoring the New Product Showcase again this year at Naidex. Companies are invited to enter products which have been developed or launched within the last 12 months. A panel of industry judges will decide on the eight finalists, who will then display their innovation on the New Product Showcase stand at Naidex, 15-17 May. Visitors to the show will vote for the most innovative product and the winner will be announced on the last day of the show. For an entry form, tel: 020 7619 7319.

Phone guide reveals all

A new guide to telephone services for older and disabled people gives details of special services which are on offer.

*It's Your Call**, a survey of the eight largest UK fixed-line and mobile operators by independent research charity Ricability, sets out the services they provide, such as free directory enquiries, alternative bill formats and priority fault repair, and includes a comparison table.

Bob Twitchen, chairman of the Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for Dis-

abled and Elderly People, said: "The survey will increase awareness and encourage new and improved services by helping to identify gaps in provision."

The guide also explains new protective regulations coming into force in October.

*Free, in print, large print, tape or Braille, tel: 020 7427 2460, minicom: 020 7427 2469.

• Ricability is urgently seeking disabled parents with children under two who would be willing to take part in user trials of babyslings. Tel/minicom as above.

Care concern

Owners of care homes claim they may have to close if they are not given more money to help them meet new government standards.

In March health Minister John Hutton announced new minimum standards of care which apply to homes providing either nursing or personal care. The standards are aimed at improving residents' health, personal care and their daily lives, as well as strengthening their rights and improving staffing levels.

The 38 new standards, detailed in the report *Care Homes for Older People* –

*National Minimum Standards**, include rules on the provision of disability equipment such as ramps, hoists and communication aids. They will come into force in April 2002.

But care home owners claimed they needed more money to meet the standards. They said the fees they were currently given by local authorities were inadequate.

The National Care Homes Association said the private sector would collapse, leaving the NHS in crisis, if funding was not increased.

*www.doh.gov.uk/ncsc/carehomes.htm



Stamp out ageism: Flo Allen, 72, of Coventry, is appearing on Age Concern posters around the country with a "best before" date stamped on her forehead. It is part of an election campaign aimed at ending age discrimination. www.age2000.org.uk

Soldiers can appeal

Former soldiers who have been refused disability allowances by the War Pensions Agency will be able to appeal against the decisions from 9 April.

The allowances are given to soldiers who have become disabled as a result of their time in the armed forces. Previously appeals could only be made against decisions on war pensions themselves. Now ex-servicemen will be able to appeal if denied disability benefits or if they disagree with the level of their allowance. The main benefit for ex-servicemen with dis-

abilities is mobility allowance.

In response to the change in the law, the Royal British Legion has extended its free advice, information and legal representation service to cover the allowances.

Tom House, head of the Legion's pensions department, said: "This has the potential for making a big difference to those who can't work, are disabled or who need constant care because of their time in the forces."

For free help and advice, tel: 020 7973 7236.

Give us a helping hand

Could you spread the word by displaying DN subscription leaflets in your organisation/place of work? Please get in touch if you come into contact with people who would benefit from DN, tel: 020 7619 7323, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Letter from Brussels

Richard Howitt MEP heralds a new EU directive on buses and coaches as a 'historic victory'



There is no more important issue for disabled people than the campaign for accessible public transport.

That is why campaigners have been getting excited about a new European directive on buses and coaches.

During the last European Parliament I couldn't believe we were debating a proposal that would guarantee that, by 2003, all new buses in urban areas would have to be fully accessible to all disabled people. I pinched myself, but it was true.

But pinching myself again, I realised it was a proposal which had started out in 1992 and which opposition had ensured would be deferred until now.

In January my colleague Scottish MEP Bill Miller had brokered a compromise which would guarantee low floors but would make boarding aids optional and would depend on accessibility of roads and pavements.

That is fine if companies

are operating where pavements are suitable for low-floor buses. But what happens if they move to areas where the low floor is no use and extra equipment is needed?

With Bill's support, I moved an amendment to guarantee that ramps or lifts should be provided but still requiring bus operators and local partners to

'Campaigners have been getting excited about a new European directive on buses and coaches'

ensure access to the bus stop.

In the face of the usual knee-jerk reaction against supposed expense, I quoted a Devon study which shows that higher usage and lower maintenance outweigh the initial investment.

Conservative opponents sought to defeat the entire package, with one MEP accusing movers of "trying to make a standardised cucumber" and another labelling it

"political interference."

The parliamentary vote was won 296-224, but doubt remains over the final confirmatory vote by representatives of the different EU governments. One final lobby is now necessary.

To cheer you up, the directive also includes a marked improvement in modern wheelchair standards; a comprehensive definition of reduced mobility; and standards for signage, handrails and no-slip floors.

On the downside, rural areas and long-distance coaches have yet to be addressed, while older buses will continue on our roads for some time.

Nevertheless, you really can hold your breath this time, because a historic victory for accessible public transport is about to be won.

Richard Howitt MEP is president of the European Parliament All Party Disability Group, e-mail: rhowitt@europarl.eu.int

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Alzheimer's hope

One of the causes of Alzheimer's disease has been successfully treated in a living creature for the first time, offering hope of a cure.

Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, USA, found that injecting antibodies into mice bred to develop Alzheimer's led to the destruction of the amyloid plaques that collect in the brain of people with

the condition. These plaques are responsible for killing brain cells.

The scientists claimed that 70 per cent of plaques in the brains of the mice disappeared within three to eight days of being treated with the antibodies.

The Alzheimer's Society gave the research a cautious welcome but warned that the same technique might not work

when tried on human beings.

Dr Richard Harvey, director of research at the Society, said: "It is interesting, but we don't yet know whether preventing or clearing plaques is going to stop or slow Alzheimer's in humans."

He added that the scientists would also need to find a better way of administering a vaccine to humans than painting it on to the brain.



What therapies work? A child with autism interacts with their mother as part of the National Autistic Society's Earlybird programme

Autism investigation

The Government has ordered an investigation into the causes of autism following a sevenfold increase in the number of children with the condition.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) was asked to conduct the study after the *British Medical Journal** said the number of children aged under 12 with autism had risen from 0.3 to 2.1 children in 10,000 between 1988 and 1999.

The MRC will look at the

prevalence of the condition, possible causes and current therapies. It will identify gaps in knowledge about autistic spectrum disorders, and suggest areas needing further research.

Meetings with specialists and interested parties will be held from now until the summer, and the MRC will report on its findings in the autumn.

*www.bmj.com

See Parent's voice, page 20.

In brief

Glaucoma help

The multiple sclerosis drug copaxone is to be tested as a treatment for glaucoma after researchers found it halted degeneration of rats' optic nerves. Scientists at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, are to begin human trials.

Post-polio warning

The British Polio Fellowship has launched Outreach 2001, contacting everyone who has had polio to inform them about post-polio syndrome. Symptoms include breathing problems.

Tel: 0800 018 0586.

MS cell study

Revolutionary research involving cell transplants may lead to a cure for multiple sclerosis (MS), researchers have claimed.

Scientists at Yale University in the US have successfully replaced Schwann cells in rats, which create the myelin sheath in the brain and spinal cord. This sheath acts like the insulation on electric wires, but in people with MS it gradually withers away, reducing the ability of nerve impulses to travel round the body.

The researchers found that cells transplanted into rats could be made to grow into a

new myelin sheath, with the result that nerve impulses improved to near-normal levels.

Further work will be carried out on other animals to test their movement and coordination after the transplants. This will show if the symptoms of MS would be reduced using this method.

It is hoped that similar transplants could be used on humans, who would have their own Schwann cells used in the transplants.

Clinical trials are expected to start in the summer.

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Transport boost

Disabled access to transport in Scotland is being strengthened with the creation of a Scottish Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (Diptac).

The committee will advise the Scottish Parliament, and was welcomed by Capability Scotland.

The committee's creation was one measure in the Transport Act, which was given

Royal Assent in January.

Others include making local, off-peak bus travel free to all holders of orange or blue badges, and exemption of disabled people from congestion charging.

Kate Higgins, Capability Scotland policy and parliamentary affairs manager, said: "These measures will improve accessibility of public transport."

Elderly abuse

Ten per cent of Scotland's pensioners suffer abuse and care agencies offer little training on spotting it, Age Concern Scotland has claimed.

The charity's research found that one in ten older people suffer some form of abuse, while nearly half of those suffer more than one form of abuse.

Linda Dunion, assistant director of Age Concern Scotland, said: "It is important we break the silence that surrounds elder abuse."

Helpline, tel: 0808 808 8141.

See page 39 for regional information.

Cuts anger

Cuts in advice services in Calderdale, West Yorkshire, could harm disability services, a charity claims.

Calderdale Disabled Advice Resource Team (CDART), the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Rhodes Street Advice Centre are bidding for funding which has been cut from £500,000 to £400,000.

CDART is angry that CAB has made a bid covering the work of all three groups, although CAB claims it will be able to offer a specialised service for disabled people.

A decision was expected at the end of March.

London's taxi cheer

Disabled people living in London have successfully campaigned for a £5m boost to the Taxicard scheme that subsidises the cost of journeys in cabs.

The money agreed for the Greater London Authority (GLA) budget in February will mean an end to the current system of boroughs deciding who is eligible and how much to charge. This has led to variation, with disabled people in Brent paying twice as much as people in most other boroughs.

Hundreds of members of DaRT, which campaigns for

accessible public transport in the capital, wrote to members of the GLA asking them to support the budget.

Now all Taxicard holders in London will pay the first £1.50 of the cost of their journey, with a subsidy of up to £9.30, and eligibility will be standardised across the city.

Daniel Sartin, DaRT's campaigns officer, said the organisation was delighted with the decision.

• Disabled people attended a Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) consulta-

tion day on the Mayor's Transport Strategy in March. Demands ranged from the financial (an exemption scheme for congestion charging) to the practical (help from better trained and motivated transport staff).

GLAD transport policy forum member Pam Moffatt said: "If there is more consultation with disabled people at the beginning of a project then most access concerns could be dealt with first rather than later, and this would be less costly."



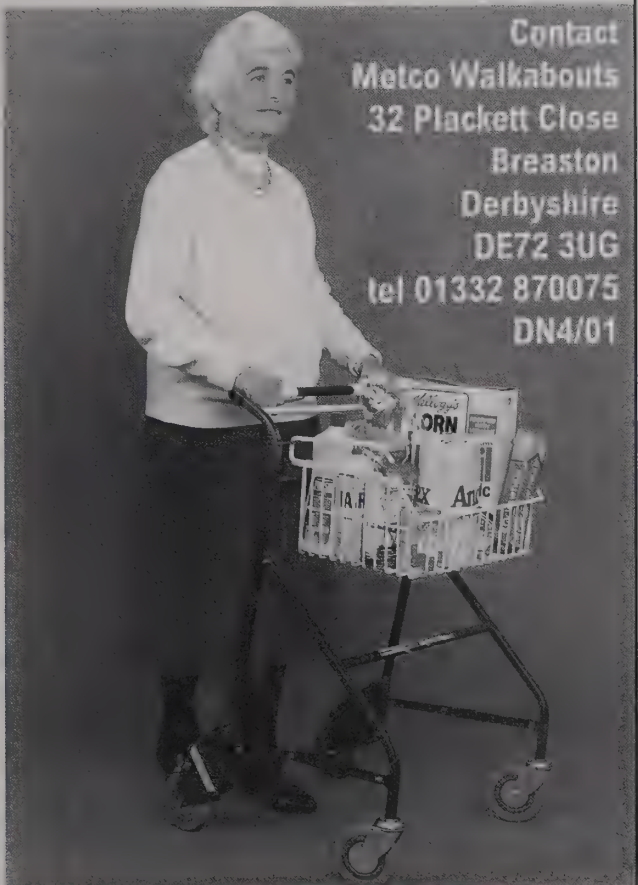
Here we go: Coach driver Charlie Inzani demonstrates the lift on the first wheelchair-accessible coach for football fans. The Iveco coach, adapted by Redwing, will be used by Charlton Athletic Disabled Supporters Association, which raised £15,000 for it. www.redwing-coaches.co.uk

Got something going on?

Have you got a local event you want to publicise in DN or that you'd like DN to come to? We want to be able to give details of exhibitions, fairs and other events across the country, and would also like to meet more of you, so let us know what you're up to. Send details to DN, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, fax: 020 7619 7331 or e-mail: judith.reid@scope.org.uk

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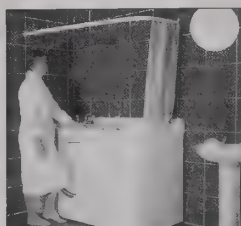
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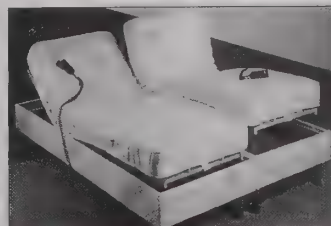
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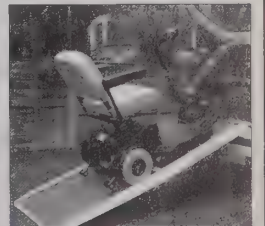
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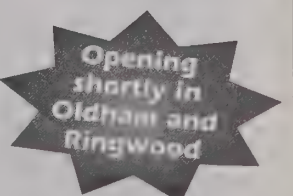
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How has the DRC fared in its first year? Emma Hawes takes a look

With 12 months under its belt, the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is pretty pleased with itself.

It has four offices in the UK, a busy helpline and has assisted at several successful tribunals. Of its 120 staff, 35 per cent are disabled.

But amongst the birthday congratulations there are voices of dissent. Some people in the disabled community feel there has been too much talk and not enough action.

The DRC was launched last April with promises of improvement for disabled people.

Minister for Disabled People Margaret Hodge (*below*) pledged: "Disabled people will



at last have a central voice; an organisation to fight their corner, raise awareness and begin the long process of changing attitudes."

One year on, the DRC faces charges of being more a government lapdog than a campaigning Rottweiler.

"There seems to be a very pally relationship between the DRC and the Government," says Sheila Blair, chair of the British Council of Disabled People. "The DRC should be more proactive and saying 'this needs to be done to address the discrimination that's going on.' Disabled people's organisations

Teething trouble for DRC?

shouldn't have to tell them 'we want this doing' – the DRC knows what it has got to do."

Criticism has been levelled at the DRC's meek acceptance of the Government's announcement last month that the exemption of small businesses from the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) will not be abolished until 2004.

Ms Blair adds: "I would be on the phone to Margaret Hodge about it, but the DRC doesn't seem to have any teeth."

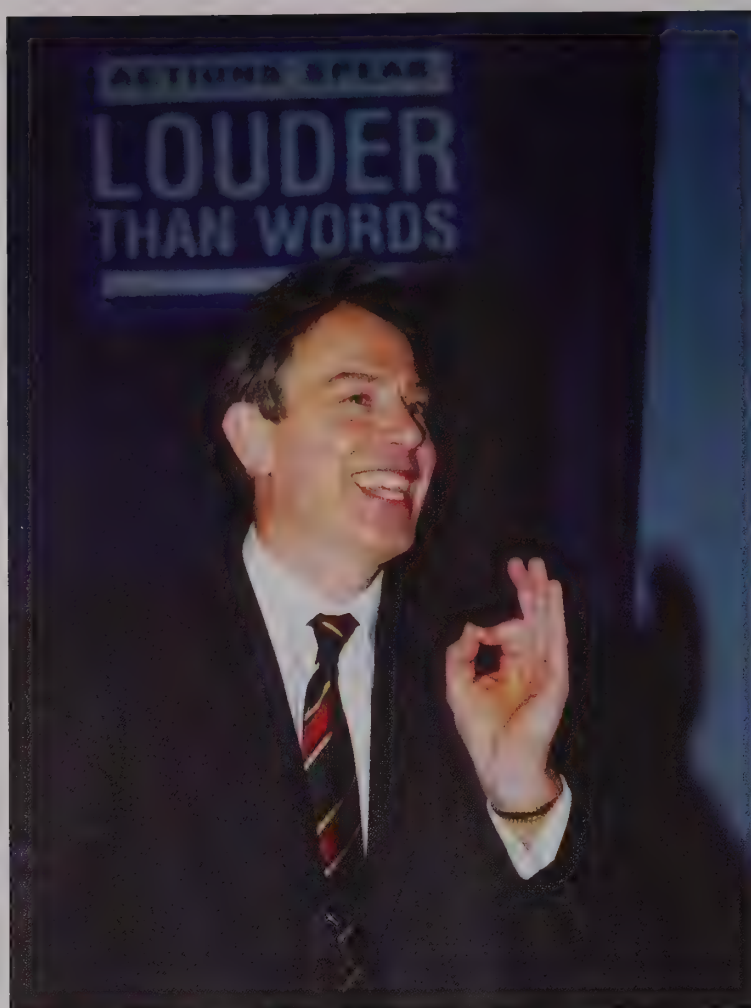
That is a common refrain. Disability employment consultant Nick Goss agrees: "It has some way to go in terms of portraying itself as a body that does have teeth."

Disabled journalist Tom Walker, who has worked on *In Touch*, the BBC radio programme for visually impaired people, is more robust in his criticism.

"Its performance has been somewhat disappointing," he says. "They seem a bit lily-livered and spineless. They need to be prepared to fight a bit more on behalf of people with disabilities."

Of course, the DRC vigorously denies these allegations.

Chairman Bert Massie (*below*) says: "It's easy to say we haven't been proactive, but it's just a nonsense. The DRC is a statutory agency, not a dis-



Prime support: Blair launches a DRC employer awareness campaign

ability charity, so even when we disagree with the Government we are not going to go out on demonstrations.

"We did say we wanted the small employers threshold abolished sooner, in 2002, but we got 2004. However, the Government accepted the DRC recommendation that the threshold should be dropped and I will certainly welcome that."

He adds: "We have leaned on the Government very heavily on a number of issues, but they haven't always responded how we would like. We are not here simply to accept what the Government says – we will put in a robust point of view when appropriate – but when we are getting what we want we are

not going to criticise."

One area where the DRC isn't getting what it wants is the Human Rights Act (HRA). It wrote to the Government asking for the power to take on cases under this Act, which Mr Massie feels would be an important part of the DRC's remit. The Government has so

even if we spent all our budget. If we can take the difficult cases and win them, then that sets the scene through case law."

In some areas there is an apparent reluctance to criticise the DRC.

Mencap is one example. In its June 1999 report *Living in Fear* it stated: "On its inception, the DRC must prioritise the issue of bullying and harassment against people with a learning disability and in its first year carry out an education campaign on this issue."

But the charity would not comment on the DRC's failure to do so.

Richard Kramer, head of campaigns, told DN: "We recognise the constraints on them. The DRC is doing a good job. There are a lot of expectations on them to deliver."

Are charities holding back on saying what they really think in order not to upset the DRC, even though both charities and the DRC are in place to support and help disabled people, not play politics?

Of course, much of the support for the DRC and its achievements is genuine. There is no denying that the first year was always going to be tough in terms of setting up the commission and getting stuck into a massive workload.

Peter Parton, disability policy officer of the Trade Union Congress, says: "The DRC is

'One year on, the DRC faces charges of being more a Government lapdog than a campaigning Rottweiler'

far refused, because it wants to look at the HRA with all the equal opportunities commissions together.

The DRC's achievements include over 44,000 calls to the helpline, just 6,000 under the target, and more than 380 people visiting its website each day.

Since last April, it has dealt with 1,817 cases of discrimination, just over the 1,800 target, and since June has provided or arranged legal representation in 32 cases, a little under the target of 40. And all this on funding of £22m for the first two years.

But there is no denying that if, as the DRC itself says, "discrimination and disadvantage are widespread," and there are 8.6 million disabled people in Britain, then a target to support 75 cases brought under the DDA over the next 12 months is leaving a large number of people to fight their own corner.

Mr Massie defends the DRC's approach: "We wouldn't be able to cover all the cases

beginning to tackle a mountain of a job in a very sensible and strategic way. It was right that they gave priority to setting up the helpline service because that's the front line, and they have conducted some successful cases. You can't deal with the mountain of disability discrimination in 12 months."

DRC commissioner James Strachan says: "Rome wasn't built in a day. We have made great strides and I am sure that will continue."

Even critics recognise that the DRC can only work within the boundaries it is given by the Government.

Ms Blair concedes: "They are doing the best job they can with the legislation they have got."

The DRC may have managed to impress some this year, but the next 12 months will be crucial if it is to prove the lapdog can – and will – show its teeth.

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DN04/01

Disability**NOW** April 2001

The Netherlands is on the verge of making euthanasia easier. Should we go the same way, asks Rod Hermeston

Karin Spink, who has multiple sclerosis, is a successful writer and likes partying with friends.

But if her condition deteriorates, Karin (*below*), 43, may consider suicide.

"Not being able to write or make myself a sandwich or relying on somebody else to clean me would be hell," she says.

So she is disappointed that a proposed law which will make



it easier for people in the Netherlands to ask their doctor to kill them or help them commit suicide may not help her.

At the moment in the Netherlands doctors can offer euthanasia or assisted suicide on request from patients facing unbearable and unremitting

Should we go Dutch?

suffering. After the patient has died the case must go to the prosecution service and a special committee also looks at the case and sends a report to the prosecutor. Provided the committee is satisfied that the doctor has met the necessary criteria, the prosecutor is unlikely to bring a charge.

But a new bill to go before the upper house in April provides that the case will not go to the prosecutor at all if the committee decides the criteria are met and, among other things, that there was no alternative care or treatment.

Even children over the age of 12 will be able to get euthanasia with the consent of their parents.

The doctor does not have to agree to a patient's request.

But it is uncertain whether the committee would accept that Ms Spink faced unbearable suffering so the case could still go to the prosecutor. She wants a further bill to make it safer for doctors to help people like her.

"When it concerns a person whose affliction is debilitating, painful or degrading but not necessarily fatal, it is totally unclear where a doctor would stand legally," she says. "The doctor would have to take a risk."

Despite Ms Spink's concerns about the limitations of the bill there is a sense that



In control: Petra Brockmöller, 65, looks fit and healthy and still leads an active life, but she has cancer.

She has discussed with a sympathetic doctor how and when she would like to end her life and she also has a living will in case she becomes unable to communicate.

"Knowing that I have control makes it easier to cope," she says. "I would ask in the first instance for assisted suicide."

where the government fails to go the courts may, and that strikes fear into the hearts of many politicians and disability campaigners.

The appeal court is due to hear a case about the doctor of a former senator who had simply had enough of life, though

to live, it is unbearable.' A judge could agree that it was unbearable because the bill does not rule it out."

Pete Vreeswyk, ethics adviser at the Dutch Council of the Chronically Ill and Disabled, is also concerned that there is not an absolute right to palliative

are turned down – doctors do not like doing it.

About 90 per cent of euthanasia cases are people with cancer and about three per cent involve disabilities like multiple sclerosis or motor neurone disease.

The Dutch government says it is important to have things done openly because that allows for greater control.

In the UK, where euthanasia is illegal, 12 per cent of doctors admit to carrying it out, according to Professor Henk Leenen, an expert on health law.

The bill also gives legal footing to living wills, where a patient can request euthanasia in advance in case they become mentally incapacitated.

Rob Jonquière, president of the Dutch Voluntary

'Euthanasia accounted for only 2.3 per cent of deaths in the Netherlands in 1995. Two-thirds of requests are turned down – doctors do not like doing it'


Euthanasia Society, which has 100,000 members, says there are still problems here. For instance, the Society would like people to be able to ask in advance for euthanasia if they later developed dementia, simply because the prospect of dementia would be horrific to them. But under the bill a doctor would have to be convinced that the suffering caused by the dementia was unbearable.

Society members also want elderly people to have the option of being given a pill which would kill them. They could take it whenever they wanted, simply because they had had enough of life.

Vreeswyk would oppose that. There is a big difference between what people decide to do privately and what society as a whole should condone, he says. He also fears pressure from relatives.

The Dutch seem willing to go further than any other country. Should other countries follow?

Johan Legemaate, professor of health law at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, warns that countries where patients do not have long-lasting relationships with their GP or care in nursing homes is not free (as in England and Wales) should tread very carefully when considering euthanasia laws.




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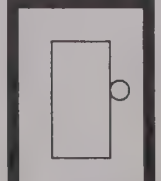
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'When it concerns a person whose affliction is debilitating, painful or degrading but not necessarily fatal, it is totally unclear where a doctor would stand legally. The doctor would have to take a risk'

he did have some medical complications. A lower court has already decided that was suffering enough.

The courts have already decided that mental suffering is grounds for euthanasia. And in a recent ruling a court decided that a doctor who ended the life of an elderly female patient without her request had acted "conscientiously."

True, she was suffering a great deal, but André Rouvoet of the Christian Union party says: "Now we have the situation in this country where you can conscientiously murder somebody."

The slippery slope argument may be hackneyed, but he says: "The next stage is for somebody with no mental or physical disease to say 'I do not want

care in the Netherlands. While the Dutch can certainly afford to provide social care for disabled people there is also a shortage of care workers. He fears budget cuts in the future might make life a lot worse for disabled people. And there is no disability rights legislation in the Netherlands, he says. For all these reasons the Council is worried about the vagueness of the criteria of suffering laid down in the bill.

"The parliament should articulate what the criteria are for unbearable suffering. At the moment it is not clear," he says.

Let's get things straight. Disabled people are not being killed *en masse*. Euthanasia accounted for only 2.3 per cent of deaths in the Netherlands in 1995. Two-thirds of requests

Joe Rajko may be smiling and softly spoken, but he is about to take the disability world by storm. Rod Hermeston went to meet him

Website wonder

Joe Rajko greets me with a plump handshake and a toothy, enthusiastic smile. There's something disarming about this softly spoken Yorkshireman from Leeds.

But behind the jolly exterior lies a shrewd mind. Joe, 38, is about to launch a major new disability website youreable.com with £1m worth of business support, after winning the Channel 4 *Emillionaire Show*.

The site launches on 18 April and will carry anything from news supplied by *DN* to product and transport information and a dating service.

Who would have thought he would be up to any of this five years ago?

Joe was born the son of a Hungarian immigrant. When he was 17, he and his brother set up a car repair company called the Beetle Peeple. He met his wife Liz when he was 26 and has two stepchildren, Leigh, 25, and Jodie, 21.

In March 1997 he had a motorbike accident which left

'He began "offloading a lot of annoyance" about the barriers facing disabled people'

him paralysed from the chest down. It was a traumatic, life-threatening episode, with parts of his body simply "shutting down." He almost died because of blood clots.

But he adapted quickly. "I never mourned, even though they say it is like losing an old friend losing your body."

Of course he has regrets. "There are things that I miss," he says. "Sex without a doubt has to be number one. I still have sex, but obviously I'd like to have sex in the way that I used to. And I miss standing in mud or snow, or feeling grass between my toes."

But he seems more hurt by the way his accident has affected his family. "The whole family were hit by a steamroller. My wife has not had a holiday since my accident. She is my full-time carer and best friend."

His real anger, though, is directed towards his local council which, he says, made him wait two years for an adapted bathroom. Before that he had to use a bucket for a toilet and wash in a bowl.

It all began to make him see society as "one big obstacle."



Sweet smile of success: Joe Rajko won £1m support for his website

"What I went through was terrible and unnecessary. But that is nothing to what other people go through," he says.

Physical work was over for Joe after his accident, although he did do part-time access consultancy work and disability awareness training for Marks and Spencer. He is also chairman of the board at the charity Care & Repair Leeds.

But Joe had always been interested in computers and at 4.30am one morning he found

himself looking at the Channel 4 website and the application form for the *Emillionaire Show*.

He began "offloading a lot of annoyance" about the barriers facing disabled people. It shocked him that the disabled community, services and information were so fragmented.

"Where disability was concerned it may as well have been the 1800s," he says. "I felt there needed to be a hub at the centre of the wheel for disability.

I put in the application that I wanted to bring together the voluntary, private and public sector under one roof."

Of 7,000 applicants he was among the 15 to get on to the programme. But there was a lot of hard work and planning involved in developing his idea before the show went on air.

Since winning he has had £1m worth of support from high-profile companies like Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting) to develop the business plan. He has taken on a chief executive, Stephen Harpin, and 15 staff.

"We are creating a catalytic event that will change people's lives," Joe says. "It is the biggest social venture since the *Big Issue*. We believe we can sustainably meet people's needs by making money and we can invest that money to meet this community's needs better."

Joe reckons there is a big market out there, with two million disabled people and carers on the internet. The company is hoping for a million visitors in its first year.

So what will youreable.com do?

It will carry sections on travel, financial services, mobility products, employment and motoring.

Financial services and other large companies will also play a part, and disability products and services will evolve. "We're

trying to get very big names to tailor their products to disabled people's needs. They have not been able to do that in the past because they have not been able to directly access the target audience.

"Where a product does not exist, youreable.com will help create it."

There will be online shopping offering discounts on

'We are creating a catalytic event that will change people's lives. It is the biggest social venture since the Big Issue'

products. The entire Hamilton Index by the Disabled Living Foundation, the bible of disability products, will also be carried on the site.

Disabled people will be able to make comments about products.

And charities will have their own forums on the site with chat rooms and noticeboards. Eventually, Joe says, all disabilities will be covered by the site.

He is going to be busy. But ever a one for fun and adventure, there is one other thing he would like to do. He wants to learn to fly microlights.

Odds-on, he'll do it.

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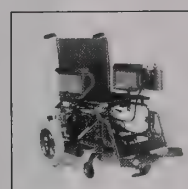
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Agnes Fletcher and Adam Thomas find the future's bright at this year's Ideal Home Show

Light and energy are key themes of this year's Ideal Home Show at Earl's Court.

The central feature is the London Electricity Lighthouse. Apparently, one in ten of us would like to live in a lighthouse. Unfortunately, from an access point of view, this and the surrounding Seaside Village were out of bounds. There are huge numbers of steps inside, and the shingle on the paths mixes all too well with wheelchair wheels.

The Bellway Scottish Power Showhome features energy-saving devices and advice. The roof is made of recycled car-tyre rubber, looking much like slate. Apparently, such roofs are weather and vandal resistant, lightweight, durable and keep heat in and noise out. Fab.



Above, Agnes tries out a Dream bed (tel: 01628 535363); right, Agnes and Adam's favourite kind of bridge; below, Agnes gets her hands dirty in the garden



More blatant in its customer-grabbing tactics was Seeboard UK. We were drawn to what looked like a stand selling energy-saving light bulbs, which promise to cut your bills by 35 per cent. A clipboard was immediately flourished before us: "Just sign here." But a quick interrogation revealed that, to get your bulbs, you had to sign up to change your electricity and gas company to Seeboard – as though only with them could you use the bulbs. We made no excuses and left.

There was more energy

advice from the House Beautiful Argos Showhome, revealing how design can bring maximum natural light into a home by using glass, keeping the layout open-plan and having floor-to-roof windows.

As far as choosing a home goes, homecheck.co.uk does a useful postcode analysis of dangers such as landfill, radioactivity and flood risk.

We paused to regather our own energies at Gardens of the World. The Englishman's home is, of course, his castle and the English garden comes complete with folly. We dallied in the oriental garden, with its azaleas and little hump-backed bridge (with one "bad" and one broken back, naturally our favourite kind!). The gardens are sponsored by greenfingers.com, a website offering plenty of gardening tips.

Recalling the House of the Future two years ago and last year's Concept House competitions, we were a bit disappointed to find things boiled down, as it were, to a little line of Concept Products. Nevertheless, the "kettleless



mug" and the "smart mirror", which tells you whether clothes are ready to wear or ready to wash and what goes with what for which occasion, could have advantages for people with different kinds of impairment. We told the designer of the smart mirror to explore teaming his concept with voice-activated software to help people with visual impairments.

Green is good and gadgets are too – and these are always one of the main delights of the Ideal Home Show, whether they are must-have ways of making life more accessible or pretty unnecessary but amusing kit.

The Bath Alarm, for example, is marketed at mothers but could really help disabled people. It attaches to the side of the bath and beeps when the water reaches the chosen height. £9.95, tel: 020 7692 0646.

We also liked the Garlic Genius' quick garlic peeler and crusher. Tel: 020 8847 3170.

Electric dreams



Bathing beauties: a luxurious bath on display at the bathstore.com stand

APOLLO PHOTOGRAPHERS

As for the Orgasmatron, a copper pressure point head massager which "can lead to tingling" – nuff said! *From around £18, tel: 01737 558755.*

All the latest kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms are on show. The Rational stand had a couple of accessible features, such as carousels so you don't have to reach into cupboards, and bi-fold doors that don't swing out to hit you in the face! *Tel: 01344 455800.*

A day out at the Ideal Home Show is consumer heaven and hell. The scale is exhausting; the money changing hands

exorbitant. DN's fuel poverty campaign was in our minds as we saw the tantalising luxury of these dream homes, with their emphasis on energy saving.

Disabled but both in work, our biggest priority is saving money for the future. But we are lucky enough to be in the market for some of the things on show, and gathering the largest selection of house and garden products in one place can make shopping more accessible.

We've been covering the show for a few years now and, in general, access is improving – though the car park had a bit

too much broken glass for our liking and as we went in one of the staff asked "Is that his ticket?" in a Does He Take Sugar? kind of a way.

Signage to lifts and information for people with hearing and visual impairments could be improved. There are no minicom lines advertised anywhere, and no talking or Brailled lifts. Come on guys, spend a bit of that cash on improving access!

Until 8 April, Earls Court, London. Tickets: 0870 606 6080. Other details, tel: 020 8515 2000, www.idealhomeshow.org.uk

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DN motoring correspondent Douglas Campbell rounds up some of the latest motoring news for disabled drivers

Revealing figures

The RAC Report on Motoring 2001, published by RAC Motoring Services, has a chapter on disabled drivers.

While the motorists surveyed did an average of 10,000 miles a year, those with a disability only did around 7,000 miles. No doubt this reflects the fact that twice as many disabled motorists were aged over 65 and well under ten per cent of them were working.

The impact of the Motability scheme is clear, with disabled motorists having much newer cars than average. Interestingly, 81 per cent of disabled motorists used their car on most days, compared with 87 per cent of all drivers.

Nearly all disabled motorists said they would find it very

difficult to adjust to being without a car, compared to 86 per cent of all motorists. Only 28 per cent of disabled drivers said they would use the car less if public transport were easier, and 61 per cent said they would not.

The RAC said: "While improved facilities for disabled drivers on public transport will not have a great impact on getting disabled drivers to switch from their cars, it is important that buses and trains, bus stops, stations and interchange locations are continually upgraded with disabled people in mind because of the large number of them who remain without the convenience of the car."

Despite provision of parking bays for disabled motorists and

the ability to park free and on yellow lines in most places, disabled motorists still had trouble parking. Only 38 per cent found a space in the first five minutes and another 24 per cent found a space in the next five minutes, while 53 per cent of all motorists found a space within five minutes and 32 per cent in the next five minutes.

Eighty-eight per cent of disabled motorists feel strongly that there is misuse of orange badges. They cannot all be mistaken in their opinion. Asked what changes should be made for disabled motorists, 48 per cent called for more parking spaces.

Do you agree with these findings? Let us know. A summary of the report is available at www.rac.co.uk



Burgeoning business: Olivia Sloane, five, and her mother Elaine present flowers to Princess Anne at the Gowrings opening

Good Gowrings news

Gowrings Mobility, manufacturer of wheelchair-accessible vehicles, opened new premises in February. The Princess Royal toured the factory, meeting staff, customers and suppliers before unveiling a commemorative plaque.

The site consists of a main factory, offices and a completely wheelchair-accessible showroom.

The £1m factory houses a custom-built production line and will treble Gowrings capacity to manufacture cars and people carriers for wheelchair passengers.

Managing director Gary Newton said: "Our main priority is to drive down production costs and pass on

the savings to our customers. This recent expansion allows us to do just that as we are able to benefit significantly from the economies of scale."

Gowrings Mobility has been making wheelchair-accessible vehicles since the early 1960s. The company offers a wide choice of wheelchair passenger vehicles under the brand name Chairman. It is an accredited Motability supplier.

The company also sells used versions. For those disabled people unable to use the Motability scheme a second-hand vehicle can provide an economical solution.

Tel: 0800 220 878, website: www.gowringsmobility.co.uk

Send motoring comments to DN, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Where is the logic in that?



When Lesley Fitzpatrick (left) applied to renew her badge, she expected it to be straightforward. She had had an orange badge for nearly six years and the only change this time was to get a new, Euro-style, blue badge.

But Oldham social services refused her renewal because she did not qualify. Her disability certainly had not changed as she was born without a right arm.

The council said there were limited circumstances in which they could issue a badge to someone with only arm disabilities. The applicant must have a severe disability in both upper limbs, regularly drive a motor vehicle but not be able to turn the steering wheel by hand even with a turning knob.

Lesley wondered if the rules had changed with the new blue badge, but the rules have not changed; the council had issued the previous badges without authority.

Lesley explained that she needs to use disabled parking spaces as she has a 14-month old baby and finds it impossible to operate car park ticket and barrier equipment. This has made no difference to their refusal.

Lesley is planning to take her problem to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. She wants the needs of people like her taken into account in the current review of the blue badge scheme.

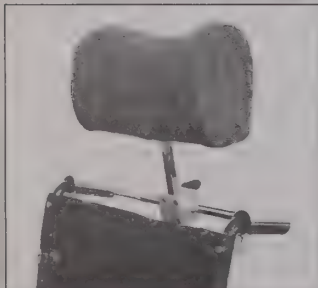


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Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Are they ripping us off?

The answer to the question you pose (DN, March) is an unequivocal "yes".

Government policy is to encourage self-regulation; but there is no regulation for any of the growing army of direct sellers who visit individuals in their homes and apply pressure to "buy on the day".

The reason for the pressure is the twin evils of high marketing costs (it is not untypical for it to cost £200-£700 to secure an in-home sales demonstration) and the self-employed status of the sales agents. If they don't sell, they don't earn. If they don't sell on appointment, their supply of prospect leads dries up by way of "punishment" by the company they are acting for.

Salesmen often have no experience or relevant qualifications and are frequently refugees from kitchen and double glazing companies who are recruited into the "home healthcare" business by the promise of exceptional earnings.

As for prices, generally these are up to twice what people should pay.

While I applaud the efforts of the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA), very few (if any) of the current crop of direct sellers are members.

Paul Lambert
Direct Mobility (supplier of disability equipment)
www.directmobility.com

The BHTA's new code of conduct for the direct selling of disability equipment will cover both individual employees of companies and self-employed people, says BHTA director Ray Hodgkinson. He hopes to have 5,000 people signed up over three years. An independent competency committee (overseeing jobs skills) will be chaired by John Hougham, vice chair of the Disability Rights Commission. DN suggests you always check whether the company you are dealing with is a BHTA member – Editor.

We sell all types of mobility products ranging from scooters to tap turners nationwide at the manufacturer's recommended retail price or less.

Some manufacturers are being held to ransom by mobility firms who have large purchase orders and then inflate the price. One manufacturer asked us not to advertise their recliner chair because we were retailing it for up to 50 per cent less than some other companies they were supplying.

Recently a lady phoned me and said she had a salesman in her house quoting £2,900 for a CTM 580 scooter. He said he would discount the scooter by £300 if she bought it that day. I told her we could supply the same scooter for £1,695.

We have been set up to try and overcome the growing

problem of people being taken advantage of in their own homes. We do not employ salespeople, which helps keep costs down. We offer free advice (tel: 0117 931 4513) and can price check products for the public. People registering on the helpline receive a card which entitles them to a ten per cent discount.

Colin Richards
Mobility Watch
Bristol
www.mobilitywatch.com

At the Disabled Living Centre in Manchester we are getting an increasing number of calls from distressed people who have bought the wrong piece of equipment to help them maintain their independence.

Some disabled and older people rarely get out and therefore rely on newspapers, magazines and the TV for information, so consequently more advertisements are appearing.

I am developing a set of leaflets called *20 Questions To Ask Before You Buy*. We need to get them seen by this potentially isolated and vulnerable section of society. Who can help us publicise them? Sue L Heaton, Dip COT, SROT, Disabled Living
4 Chad's Street
Manchester M8 8AQ
e-mail: information@disabledliving.co.uk

"madman" punched him in the face and sent him on a six-foot drop into a security pit. Hardly the work of a "maniac". He was just living out a fantasy many (me excluded) have, wasn't he?

Considerate con

A thief in New Jersey stole a disabled woman's adapted van and took it on a short joyride before dumping it. He took the trouble to lock the van and set the alarm before doing a runner, leaving only a slight scratch on the paintwork. Whatever next? Burglars that do the hoovering before walking out with your stereo?

You might be able to pull the wool over C4's eyes, BBC, but we know better.

All the same, disability shows might get decent ratings and avoid being dropped if disabled people actually told TV bosses what they want to see in them to start with.

Sing when you're spinning

Describing an attack on pop singer Robbie Williams by an audience member during a show in Germany, the *Mirror* showed its grasp on PC language isn't up to the mark. The unnamed "crazed fan" got backstage and attacked Robbie halfway through a song. The

Parking: for DN readers the nightmare goes on

In our shopping town, Inverness, there are few dedicated parking spaces and exit from the vehicle is into heavy traffic.

The main problem, as usual, is unauthorised parking and lack of control over it. It's prevalent all over the UK in supermarket, hotel and other public car parks. Our polite remonstrations are met with, at best, indifference.

Interestingly, in France there are a number of systems in operation at supermarkets, ranging from areas accessed by a special key to our particular favourite – offending cars have an extremely sticky notice placed over the driver's side of the windscreen by the shop manager.

For the owners of parking spaces not to exercise the necessary controls amounts, we think, to a breach of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Gordon and Dorothy Nairn
Fort Augustus, Inverness-shire

...and on

I fully agree with Douglas Campbell's comments (DN, February). The problem does seem to be getting worse.

What annoys me most is the number of people who sit in their cars while they are taking up a disabled bay. I presume they have sent someone else to do the shopping. The bays are also misused by a number of pick-up truck drivers.

Many bays are positioned in car parks where they are impossible or unreasonably difficult to reach because they are blocked by queues of traffic waiting to enter or leave.

Some bays are put in at an angle, making it impossible to open the door fully without a companion holding it for you.

More consultation is needed between disabled people and

planners. It is all too common for disabled people to be presented with schemes that able-bodied planners think we need.

Laura Mansell
Hertfordshire
We've had a big response. Keep your comments coming – Editor

Mirror, mirror

On the letter from Mike Rogers complaining about low-set mirrors in disabled toilets (DN, March), a walking disabled person can go into an ordinary toilet; the wheelchair user can never do that. There are many people like me who are quadriplegic and do not have an option.

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PC pulse

by Dan Batten
(No) right to reply

DN was excited to hear that, after a push from a

reader, Channel 4's *Right to Reply* was going to take a look at the poor state of disability programming at the BBC. However, after calling the BBC, who assured him that there was loads of disability stuff coming up, including a disability online service, *Right to Reply*'s editor decided that there was no story.



'Telling his story has helped him a lot'

Writing a book about Asperger's syndrome was a big turning point for her son, says Brenda Boyd

In many ways, Kenneth, 11, seems just like any other boy his age.

He looks completely normal. He can be chatty, playful, funny and affectionate. He loves jumping round the furniture and watching TV – especially cartoons and WCW wrestling. He plays computer games and loves reading. He does not like being obedient!

All very typical – but there are a lot of things about Kenneth which are far from typical. He has Asperger's syndrome (AS), a form of autism.

'If things were done the wrong way he would get into an awful state. Like if he stepped on the wrong paving stones'

Until Kenneth was diagnosed at age eight, I had not even heard of AS, but it has a profound effect on Kenneth's life, in particular his emotional, social and behavioural development.

As a baby Kenneth was very much loved. From an early age



Buoyant again: the AS diagnosis lifted Kenneth's spirits, as did the publication of his book

he seemed "different" and was very difficult to manage. Things got worse as he got older. In social situations like playgroup and school he refused to cooperate or mix with the rest of the children and he had an extreme eating disorder.

He also displayed rigid and obsessive behaviour. If things were done the "wrong" way he would get into an awful state. Like if he stepped on the "wrong" paving stones. Or got out of the car the "wrong" side. When he got upset he would yell and boss in a tyrannical way which could make him look like a complete control freak!

Just before the diagnosis, Kenneth was at his lowest ebb. He was very depressed and anxious, and his behaviour was getting out of control. The diagnosis was a turning point. It let us begin the journey of acceptance and understanding.

Kenneth's school made huge efforts to help him, but sadly school continued to be one of his biggest difficulties. We had no school locally which could meet his needs, so I decided to keep him at home. The Education Board did all they could to support us, providing him with a laptop and eight hours a week of home tutoring.

At home Kenneth gradually became more relaxed and happy and better able to settle

had something big in mind. Julie and I were concerned that he was setting himself up for disappointment. After all, ten-year-olds don't get books published (or so we thought).

Yet the publication happened very easily. Jessica Kingsley, the publishers, took to the book as soon as they saw it. They had the vision to realise how potent the book could be in presenting a child's inner perspective, and were so helpful and sensitive that the whole process seemed very simple.

Telling his story has helped Kenneth a lot. He is very happy with how it has turned out. He knows he has done something important by helping people to understand AS better. Which is

'Kenneth talked calmly about how his book would help people learn about AS when it was published – it was clear he had something big in mind'

and apply himself. He has come a long way, but it has taken a huge amount of effort and commitment from his very dedicated home tutor and me. As well as AS, Kenneth had a high attention deficit hyperactivity disorder score and it took months of patient work at the start just to get him to sit at a table and apply himself.

It seems as if his book was "meant to be." The idea came from Julie Connell, the Education Board psychologist, although what she had in mind was really a small, personal "book". She suggested it as good therapy for Kenneth, and the project evolved from there.

Right from the start Kenneth talked calmly about how his book would help people learn about AS "when it was published" – so it was clear he

exactly what he set out to do.

AS is a very misunderstood condition, attracting little sympathy. Life is still a huge challenge for Kenneth. Even though he doesn't intend it, his manner can appear off-putting, rude and arrogant.

Often the problem is that he is so honest he makes people feel uncomfortable. He has to work hard to learn the social skills most people take for granted. Peer relationships are particularly difficult. He needs things to be very predictable and uses strategies such as timers, checklists and reward systems.

But it is his open and positive attitude to his difficulties which is so inspiring. I've learnt a lot from Kenneth. AS is just part of who he is and I wouldn't swap him for the world.

Asperger Syndrome, the Universe and Everything

Extracts from Kenneth Hall's book



"I always knew I was different and that I wasn't quite like other children. It's hard to say exactly how I knew. I detected some differences and I felt that things were not the same for me as for other children. Other children seemed to behave differently ..., but I didn't know why. At that time, although I felt different I felt normal about being different. I

'If books were food I would be very fat. I wasn't taught how to read. I just discovered how when I was very young'

thought I was the normal one and that it was the other people who were different, not me. Which is a perfectly feasible way of thinking.

"...If books were food I would be very fat. I wasn't ever taught how to read. I just discovered how when I was very young and I have enjoyed it ever since. I have over 400 books which I keep in alphabetical order by author.

Some people say AS kids prefer to read factual books. This is definitely untrue. I would reckon about 97 per cent prefer fiction. I like adventure stories best. I would like to be a character out of an adventure in one of my books. Sometimes I like to read the same book over and over many times. I have read some of my very favourite books approximately 50-55 times.

"...When I started to read the *Harry Potter* books I could not even put them down or stop thinking about them and I keep on reading them over again. I couldn't wait for the fourth one to be published. I had my name on the waiting list for months and I was one of the very first in the UK to get it. The postman brought it at 7.30am and I was so excited I could hardly put it down that day. It was brilliant! I had the whole book, which was 636 pages, read by that same afternoon."

£9.95, Jessica Kingsley, tel: 020 7833 2307, www.jkp.com

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...get a job. Emma Hawes has some hints that could make job-hunting easier

These days competition for jobs is fierce and the old adage "if you fail to prepare, prepare to fail" stands true. Follow our tips to make sure you have prepared – to win.

National and local newspapers carry job adverts, and job centres have a variety of vacancies, but to narrow your search, try recruitment agencies, professional journals and magazines, and even writing to a company you would like to work for.

Adverts that carry the Government's "two ticks" symbol, which shows a company is "positive about disabled people," will guarantee you an interview if you meet the minimum criteria.

Next, write your *curriculum vitae* (CV), a summary of your achievements, qualifications and abilities. If you have little formal work experience, think about skills you use every day. A wheelchair user who has to arrange their travel to make sure they catch the accessible bus and that someone is on hand when they arrive may have excellent organisational skills, for example. If you get on well with people, you may have good communication skills.

Some jobs require you to fill in an application form, so transfer details from your CV.

Prepare for success



Building a career: Sean Walsh (right) is a wheelchair user because of juvenile arthritis. He trained as an architectural technician but had difficulty getting interviews.

"I stopped putting that I was disabled on my CV, and as soon as I did I got interviews," he says. Even at interviews, he experienced discrimination. Once he was asked if he was able to hold a pen and was told to prove it. He took on voluntary work with the Access Group, Milton Keynes, and now has a post with them as an access coordination officer. He also runs his own architectural practice.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires firms that employ more than 15 people to make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled people, like

accepting applications in alternative formats or providing a sign interpreter for an interview. All firms will have to do this from 2004.

When you get an interview, dress smartly, preferably in a suit, with clean shoes and tidy hair. First impressions count.

The biggest dilemma is when to disclose your disability. Most disability recruitment

Top tips for a good CV

- Use an easy-to-read font on a word processor.
- Make sure your CV is no longer than two sides of A4.
- Put your name and contact details clearly at the top.
- Start with the most important details, like your skills and experience.
- List previous employment, including voluntary work and any work experience.
- Include your qualifications and education history.
- Give details of at least two people who can give you a professional reference.

specialists recommend leaving it off your CV but say you need to disclose it when asked to an interview.

Martin Sissons, information service manager at Skill: the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, says: "If it's a visible disability, it's best to disclose it before you turn up."

Interviewers might need to make special arrangements and if your disability is a shock it could blight your chances.

Cathy Wheatley, equal opportunities adviser with disfigurement charity Changing Faces, adds: "Turn up in a positive way and make the most of your appearance. Make eye contact and have a firm handshake to give a good impression straight away."

It is important to remember that an employer has to know you are disabled for the DDA to apply. Ian Hutt, regional director of the charity Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, says you should bring the subject up during interview, and ask if your interviewers have any questions.

It is up to you to take the opportunity to allay their fears

about your ability to do the job, he adds.

You can also tell them about the Government's Employment Service (ES) scheme Access to Work, which pays for equipment and alterations you need to do a job. If you apply within six weeks of starting, the ES will pay all the costs, otherwise the employer pays a percentage.

The ES also has disability employment advisers in local job centres who help with training, advice and filling in application forms. You can also go on a six-week work preparation course. The New Deal for Disabled People, to go national in July, will help people with a long-term illness or disability who are on incapacity benefits. Personal advisers give information and support.

You can also get help with your travel costs through the Fares to Work scheme if you cannot use public transport.

So, don't delay. Prepare yourself and get that dream job.



Signs of support: Kevin Gomes is deaf and uses British Sign Language. He was unable to get interviews until the Royal National Institute for the Deaf helped him fill in application forms and provided an interpreter for interviews.

He now works as an administration assistant at the Medicines Control Agency. Colleagues have learnt sign language, and he has been given a minicom and fire alarm pager.

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Useful contacts

Action for Blind People has a job search service in London. Contact Louise Deane, tel: 0781 112 6562.

Changing Faces, tel: 020 7706 4232.

Deaf UK Jobs is a free job advert bulletin. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to deaf-uk-jobs-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk

Disability Net carries job adverts on its website, tel: 0115 911 0315, website: www.disabilitynet.co.uk

Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, tel: 020 7481 2727.

Employment Service, tel: 0800 328 4933.

Ready Willing and Able is a recruitment bulletin for disabled people, tel: 020 8696 7006, e-mail: rwa@lineone.net

The Royal National Institute for the Blind gives advice and training, tel: 020 7388 1266, fax: 020 7388 2034.

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People offers advice and training, tel: 020 7296 8000, minicom: 0808 808 9000.

Scope runs the Fast-Track scheme for graduates, offering a year's employment and personal development training, tel: 020 7619 7299, minicom: 020 7619 7181.

Skill: the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities offers help and advice on job-hunting, tel: 020 7450 0620, website: www.skill.org.uk

Workable organises work placements, tel: 020 7553 0002, e-mail: workableUK@aol.com

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Many offices may now have dress-down days, but most jobs still require you to look smart. DN took three readers to an HSBC office in the City of London to try out the latest work outfits.

James Haskings, 28, does research for Lib Dem disability spokesman Andrew George MP on a voluntary basis and is also attending interviews for

Give your work image a boost with some smart clothes. Damien Vessey and Laura Strong get three readers in work mode

jobs. He often finds himself having to impress potential employers or rubbing shoulders with MPs in the House of Commons.

James, who has epilepsy and heart problems, favours

dark suits. "I go for navy suits. They blend in well in the places I work."

For a change, we gave James a light grey suit from Marks and Spencer. He took to the colour but thought it more for the summer. He liked the purple shirt and tie but would normally have chosen more contrasting colours.

His second suit was navy with a purple shirt and striped tie to match. He felt much more at home in this: "It would go down better where I work. It looks more formal."

Finally, James tried on a dark grey suit from Next combined with a bamboo-coloured shirt and blue/gold tie. He liked the comfort of the suit and the price, too – so much so that he's going to buy one!

Vicki Raymond, 38, is a freelance disability equality and Disability Discrimination Act trainer for companies and other organisations.

"You have to dress smartly for freelance work," says Vicki, who is a wheelchair user. "It makes you feel better and gives you confidence. That's why I wear trousers, especially when I have to use the car. Not only do I have to look smart, I also need to feel comfortable."

Vicki finds that Marks and Spencer's three lengths of

Clothes that

trousers and its petite range mean she can now buy off-the-peg trousers and wear them straight away, rather than taking them up or buying from specialist companies.

First we gave her a pale blue suit from Marks and Spencer with a black top and floral scarf from Accessorize. She wouldn't normally choose the colour, although everyone

agreed it suited her and the fit was good.

The next outfit she tried on was a green linen trouser suit from Marks and Spencer. It got the thumbs-up, looking professional and feeling comfy.

Her last outfit was a bold floral shirt from German mail-order company Rolli Moden, which Vicki liked. She gave up on the company's trousers – so



Look the part: James wears Marks and Spencer suit (£199), Thomas Nash shirt (Debenhams, £25) and Marks and Spencer tie (£20)

Smart tips

People in the public eye reveal their secrets for looking good

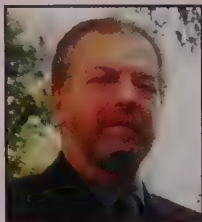


Tanni Grey-Thompson, Paralympic gold medallist: "I wear trouser suits a lot, mostly because I am more comfortable and my legs are fairly skinny. Skirts are not the greatest thing if people are watching me transferring in or out of a car! At the moment, Marks and Spencer is doing a great range of suits and Jacques Vert do some gorgeous outfits – because their colours stand out, I make a note of what I've worn to a big event and then mix and match the next time.

I tend to buy a lot of clothes in the same colour range – lots of dark blues, so if I'm packing in a hurry I will always have clothes that match.

I buy a lot of stuff from my local Oxfam. They seem to get a lot of short jackets in, which is great because more fashionable shops seem to be going for longer styles. I have bought a Next velvet jacket in purple for £3.50 and a Chanel one for £8."

Bryan Heiser, special adviser to Transport for London: "Buy the best clothes you can and go for quality, not quantity, classics not trendy. Buy standard clothes and find yourself a dressmaker/tailor to do alterations – there's lots of bits of us – mainly behind! – that don't show. If you're in London, try the designer warehouse sales – www.dwsllondon.co.uk – for really cheap designer clothes."



Anne Begg MP: "After I was elected I had to develop my own style to suit my busy lifestyle and one I hope also suits me.

Because I travel so much and need to travel light, I have one base colour – usually black or navy. Then I have a couple of jackets in different colours and a couple of colourful scarves. Without much effort I have four outfits.

I'm now about to give away a trade secret: all my jackets are the same pattern, just different materials. They are short, boxy jackets with a plain round neck. I get them made to measure because off-the-peg don't fit. I have a few in expensive materials for black-tie dinners, but no one notices they are all the same! I wear trousers with elastic waists instead of skirts. They come up to just under my bust so look awful, but once the jacket goes on top, all is hidden."



Smart but chic: Louise wears Jasper Conran suit (£275) and Hyphen top (£30), both from Debenhams



Pretty in purple: Vicki wears Marks and Spencer suit (£130) and Accessorize scarf (£7.99), own top

t mean business



Professionals: James – Marks and Spencer suit (£199) and shirt (£22), and Thomas Nash tie (Debenhams, £15), and Louise – John Rocha suit (Debenhams, £150) and Marks and Spencer top (£14)

at they fell in pools round her feet
the company will take them up
(if you ask). Rolli makes clothes
y for wheelchair users and the
is fine, but Vicki says it's easier to
t-street shops nowadays.
se Deane, 29, is a job search
ator at Action for Blind People.
se, who is blind in one eye and
ut 30 per cent vision in the other,
's a very public role and it really
I present a good image as a visu-
aired person. Feeling comfort-
he most important thing but I
pier in smart clothes."

**very public role and it
helps if I present a good
as a visually impaired
1. But feeling comfortable
most important thing and
appier in smart clothes'**

also tends to wear high heels and
"You need a bit of practice with
you're visually impaired. My
perception is not great, for exam-
ples in the pavement can look
er than they are."
chooses skirts rather than trousers
sier to look sloppy in trousers
fortunately, we live in a society
oking good is important."
first outfit was a camel-coloured
ohn Rocha, part of Debenhams'
collection, jazzed up with an
sleeveless polo-neck top from
nd Spencer. It looked good and
thought it would go down
work.
second suit was a bit more origi-
pped black trousers with a black
r the top. The black was bright-
with a white top and pale blue
n Accessorize. With her black
e whole outfit gave her a profes-
ok with a trendy twist.



Banish the office blues: Vicki wears Marks and Spencer suit (£125) and top (£23), and Accessorize scarf (£6.99)

Louise's final outfit – a camel-coloured suede Jasper Conran trouser suit from Debenhams – drew a chorus of approval. Louise thought it would be suitable for work if you wore the right accessories and could carry off such a slinky number.

At £275, Louise didn't think it was too expensive for a designer suit: "A man would probably spend that much and it's good quality. I don't know

whether I'd be able to concentrate on my work if I was wearing it, though – I'd be thinking about pulling my stomach in the whole time!"

The models' consensus was that smart is best for work – if you look good, you feel good and you give a positive impression. And now that high-street stores are offering such a wide range of sizes, materials and styles, there's no excuse for not looking business-like.



JAMIE FACER

Modern look: Louise wears black trousers (£34.99) and tunic (£39.99), white top (£19.99 for pack of three), all from Next, and Accessorize scarf (£7.99)

Contact details

Accessorize, tel: 020 7313 3000, www.accessorize.co.uk
Debenhams, tel: 0845 605 5044, www.debenhams.com
Marks and Spencer, tel: 020 7268 1234, www.marksandspencer.com
Next, tel: 0116 286 6411, www.next.co.uk
Rolli Moden, tel: 00 49 6226 960 203, www.rolli-moden.de
Many thanks to HSBC for use of their office



Talk business: Louise – as before; James – Next suit (£130), Marks and Spencer shirt (£30) and Thomas Nash tie (Debenhams, £15); Vicki – John Rocha suit (as before) and Rolli Moden shirt (£29)

Do you want to be part of a huge international poetry and art exhibition? Read on for more details

There is a common aim world-wide – to create a society in which people with and without



Nguyen Thanh Chuong's painting of Tran Quoc Minh's poem *Bridges*

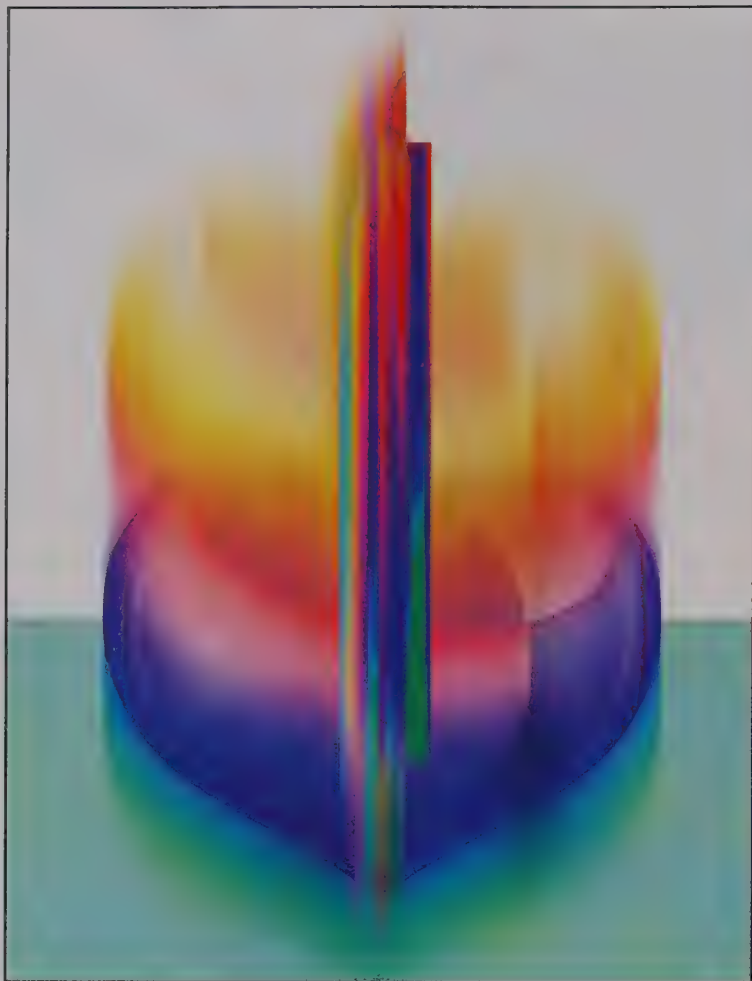
disabilities can reach greater mutual understanding and live together in harmony.

To help bring this about, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation NHK is launching its second *International Exhibition of the Heart*, in which disabled and non-



Ikko Tanaka's artwork for Shiho Ogasawara's poem *Hands*

One heart – one world



disabled people collaborate to produce poems and artwork.

People with a disability are asked for previously unpublished poems expressing what they feel in daily life. Then artists will be given a poem and asked to convey through a work of art, with a "heart" motif, the emotion the poem arouses in them. Artists may include photographers and video artists. Half of them will have a disability.

A major exhibition of the best poems with their artwork will be held in London early in 2002. Admission will be free.

Last year the exhibition toured six countries taking its message to a quarter of a million people. This year it will go on to the USA and Japan.

NHK's partners in the UK are DN and the National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF).

If you would like to be part of the event, read on.

"Weather"

by Fabrizio de Francesco

When you approach
the heart beats faster
and from the window the sun
appears.

When clouds transform,
drops fall from the sky.
Thunder and lightning
illuminate the streets.



JOSE ZARAGOZA (PAINTER AND CINEMATOGRAPHER)

Competition rules

1. The competition is open to disabled people only, no age limit.
2. Each person may submit up to six poems.
3. The poem must be original work, unpublished, maximum length 15 lines.
4. The poem must convey your feelings or experience of everyday life, eg living, happiness, sadness, hope, determination, family.
5. Handwritten poems are preferred, but Braille or printed versions will be accepted. You can also submit via the DN website at www.disabilitynow.org.uk
6. On the same sheet as your poem, add your name, address, phone/fax number, age and disability. If you are submitting through a school or organisation, please give its name, the manager's name, address and phone/fax number.
7. Deadline for entries: 30 June 2001.
8. Twenty poems will be chosen by a UK selection committee.
9. Successful writers will be notified by 31 July 2001.
10. Copyright will remain with the entrants, but the organisers reserve the right to use all poems, free of charge, for publicity purposes.
11. The judges' decision is final.
12. The competition is not open to staff of DN or the National Disability Arts Forum.

Send entries by post to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR. Entries will not be returned.



Disability Now
National Disability Arts Forum
NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)



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fax 01344 770950 e-mail choice@gtinet.gov.uk or visit our website at www.justmobility.co.uk/roadshow

Winning holiday shots



DN readers obviously go on some exciting and exotic holidays – we had some brilliant entries for our holiday snaps competition.

It was difficult to decide on a winner, but Len Archer, of London, came up trumps with his pictures of Rajasthan, India, which managed to convey the life of people there. Margaret Lees, of East Ayrshire, was runner-up. Her shots of Canada captured the cold brightness of the country.

First prize was a trip to Jersey, staying at the Maison des Landes Hotel. Len was unable to go but has kindly donated his prize to Margaret. For more information about Maison des Landes, write to Maison des Landes Hotel, St Ouen, Jersey, Channel Islands JE3 2AA, tel: 01534 481683.



Len Archer



Margaret Lees



Goodbye to all that: Brendan Wilson's powerful and moving book of photographs *Goodbye Asylum – The Last Ward at Shenley Hospital* is a record of the last people to leave the psychiatric hospital, including Ann (above). £5 plus 46p P&P from London Disability Arts Forum, Diorama Arts Centre, London NW1 3ND, tel: 020 7916 6351.

Radio

Dan Batten

A March episode of BBC Radio 4's discussion series *Harsh Realities* dealt with that hoary old chestnut, disability and genetic testing.

This time a doctor, health professional and Disability Awareness in Action's Rachel Hurst debated the issues.

Once again, the medical profession showed disability as negative and something to be eradicated. The doctor's example of a "Down's syndrome child" being what "people don't want" backed up Hurst's statement that people, especially doctors, view disabled people as "a pool of contaminated genes" and not as valid lives.

Thank goodness the "carriers" in the interview sections stood up for

themselves. A pair of wheelchair-using rugby players didn't exactly sound depressed about their lot and one chap with impaired speech said that to be "normal" would be his nightmare.

Hurst followed up with a refusal of the medical world's treatment, and the health professional said life quality was relative. The doc sounded shaken.

The guests were well guided by presenter Niall Dickson, but

the show went over all-too-familiar ground.

Still, at least it gave the uninitiated an idea that life with a disability doesn't equal a living death.

Send information about local arts events to DN, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk Please try to give at least six weeks' notice.

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Look out for

- **Equality and Access Training in the Arts (Equata)** is updating its register of disabled artists in Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Gloucestershire. The database will be available to art venues and will create an artists' network. *Equata*, 22 Lower Town, Sampford Peverell, Devon EX16 7BJ, tel: 01884 829265.

- **The First Isthmus Open Poetry Competition** is looking for entries. There are cash prizes every month until the event ends on 25 October. Entries cost £3 per poem (£2 for young people of 17 years and under), and money raised goes towards Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centres. Put your name and address on a different sheet of paper to your poem. *Cheques payable to Ouse Valley Poetry; uncrossed postal orders also accepted.* Ouse Valley Poetry, c/o 91 St Johns Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 9QD.

- **Heart 'n' Soul's** new musical *Large*, about life with a learning disability, is on at the Albany Theatre, Deptford, 27-31 March, and may then go on tour. Tel: 020 8692 4446. See DN review next month.

- **Exposed**, an exhibition of photography and video by Londoners with learning disabilities, is on at Oxo Tower Wharf, 31 March-22 April. Admission free, tel: 020 7401 2255, the.gallery@oxo

Theatre

Ruth Gould



Quasimodo? Don't you know this is the most quoted disabled character in people's minds?

Isn't this a portrayal of a stereotypical disabled person deserving pity and sympathy, who also happens to fall victim to "unrequited love"? What are Strathcona doing this particular production for? Is Disney funding them?

I went ready to dislike and criticise *Notre-Dame de Paris*, to question the reasons behind the choice... but it was so good.

Strathcona have done it again: they challenge and inform us by making us question our attitudes to "disability" and how we judge people. The *alter ego* (Quasimodo's inner voice)

helps us get inside the character and feel his discrimination and oppression, which allows us to get angry and even laugh with Quasi. We feel his pain, injustice and love.

He is beautifully and sensitively portrayed by Pius Hickey and, as for Esmerelda, (Suzy Bebbington), what seductive dance movements! The other characters give themselves totally to their performances, working as a team to provoke emotionally charged reactions.

It was such a treat to feel part of the story, from the first impressive smokey entrance to the harrowing flogging scene. As a piece of entertainment it works; as a theatrical experience it inspires; and as a way of getting across a message it's powerful.

See it. Take your friends. On tour until 5 May, ending at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, tel: 020 7740 2440, e-mail: stc@strathco.demon.co.uk



Ringing the changes: Strathcona's play gives a new perspective

Dance

Celeste Dandeker



High Spin, an integrated company of dancers with and without learning difficulties, performed their new work *Rice Rain* at Jackson's Lane Theatre in March as part of an ambitious tour of seven venues in London and the south.

Rice Rain is choreographed by Liz Agiss and Billy Cowie, their second collaboration with High Spin. The programme tells us it takes its inspiration from images of Japan and it certainly manages to pack in as many as it can, clichés and all.

The cast of ten wove in and out of group images, starting with a shoal of fish gliding in slow motion across stage while a lone snorkeller bearing chopsticks tracks down the weakest and freshest *sushi*.

There were traditional images of lacquered fans and conical hats amongst the contemporary, such as the incomprehensible craze of karaoke and Kitty kitsch.

There was also a hilarious rendition of rubber-masked lookalike Elvis characters gyrating to *You Make Me Feel Lonely Baby*, and a touching journey by a woman whose shiny black hat masked her face as she threw down her handkerchief and retrieved it over and over again as if reciting a litany.

The first half closed impressively with Ben Pierre in a long black robe holding



Storming performance: Ben Pierre ends the first half impressively

aloft two black umbrellas while rice rain literally hailed down on him.

There are personalities amongst the performers, notably Andy Saunders who has natural comic timing and the ability to work an audience.

Full of energy, the performance was imaginative and entertaining on the whole. But it would benefit from an edit of the less choreographed sections which were unclear and dull in comparison and merely served as padding.

On tour until 9 May, tel: 01273 234734, www.carousel.org.uk

Look out for

• EtCetera is a free international arts bulletin from the National Disability Arts Forum UK. Find past and current issues at www.topica.com/lists/etcetera/read

• Indepen-dance and the Travellers Dance Company are performing *On the Road* at the Shottstown Miners' Welfare and Social Club, Penicuik, (30 March) and at Tramway in Glasgow (7 April). The two dance companies include adults with learning disabilities, their carers and other artists. £2, tel: 0131 229 3555 (Penicuik performance) or tel: 0141 287 5511 (Glasgow performance).

• The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) has talks for deaf visitors – *Gesture in Art* (11.30, 30 May) and *Inventing New Britain: The Victorian Vision* (13.00, 19 July), which accompanies the museum's Victorian exhibition. Talks are free; admission to the exhibition is £7.50/£2.50. For full information, tel: 020 7942 2197, fax: 020 7942 2193, e-mail: bookings.office@vam.ac.uk

• For visually impaired visitors, the V&A has visits to the exhibition *Inventing New Britain: The Victorian Vision* at 11am on 1 May, 6pm on 23 May and 2.30pm on 19 July. Visits include some touch and some description. The museum is also running a course on photography for visually impaired visitors. Cameras provided or bring your own. Free, 22 August, contact details as above. Send your arts information to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk, fax: 020 7619 7331.

Television

Jane Shepherd

The frontiers of medical knowledge were pushed back by several programmes recently. C4's excellent *Embarrassing Illnesses* tackled incontinence, hair loss and stammering with equal sensitivity, paying tribute to "everybody who had the courage to take part." Quite.

Horizon (BBC2) revealed how former stuntman Tim Lawrence inadvertently tamed his Parkinson's disease: "Can I have an 'E' please, Bob?" "No, you can't, Tim, it's illegal." Other challenges faced parents of children with "attachment disorders." Sadly, Hayley and Sergei refused to be tamed, their defiant behaviour resistant even to being sat on regularly by a large adult. Rather than me.

Was BBC1's *Fragments of Genius* a voyeuristic exploration of autistic savants or legitimate scientific research? Either way, I found it riveting.

Now ER's back (C4), our screens fill once more with industrial quantities of ketchup. Gory surgery was also undertaken (for real) on *Tomorrow's World* (BBC1) and *Children's Hospital USA* (C5) to overcome epilepsy: TW removed the offending part of the brain, whilst the Americans opted for a kind of "swipe card" (vagal nerve stimulator) which zaps the seizure magnetically, heading it off at the pass. Amazing.

Shame we can't yet "zap" multiple sclerosis. *Who was Jacqueline du Pré?* (C5) told the tragic tale of this hugely talented musician – "a creature beyond words" who died aged 42. No one had a bad word to say about her – unlike the film-of-the-book *Hilary and Jackie*, which took full advantage of the fact that you can't libel the dead.

Vee-TV (C4) bursts on to Saturdays from an internet cafe near you. Made by and for deaf young people, it's lively, vibrant, funky and fun, with video diaries from deaf backpackers and a sexy film about deaf clubbers. See *Hear* (BBC2) please take note.

Apart from the fab Gap-ad-style opening titles, I couldn't make much of *Metrosexuality* (C4). This *Sex-and-the-City-meets-Queer-As-Folk-on-acid* drama features Mat (*Freak Out*) Fraser. Will someone please pass me an "E"...

★★★★ excellent, ★★★ very good, ★★ good, ★ OK, ♪ poor

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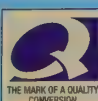
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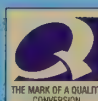
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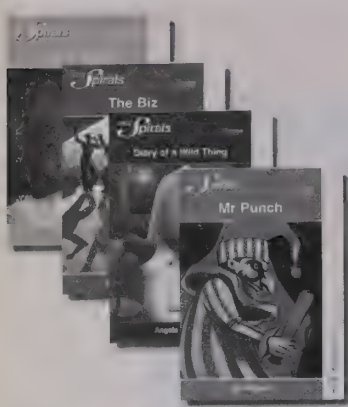
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Book news

• The *Spirals* range for reluctant readers is being relaunched (*above*). Aimed at teenagers and adults with a low reading age, the books have gripping, grown-up plots and attractive layout. £4, Nelson Thornes.

Fact becomes fiction

Chang and Eng by Darin Strauss is a story based on fact, but heavily interwoven with fiction.

It is about conjoined twins born in Siam (now Thailand) in the early 19th century. Considered unacceptable freaks, they narrowly escape the death sentence by jumping on their hands and performing for the King.

And so starts a lifetime of touring and entertaining or, better put, a lifetime of exhibitionism as a curiosity. Whilst initially managed by a third party, Chang and Eng eventually manage themselves and promote their own show,

gaining considerable notoriety. As a means to make money, they tour the world and continue to do so up until their deaths. As well as their performance work, the book visualizes their lives as farmers and their marriages to Adelaide and Sarah with whom they had 21 children between them.

The skeleton of the story is from recorded detail of Chang and Eng's life, but the book is primarily fiction, with Strauss narrating the inner musings of Eng. Strauss's prose makes a good stab at sincerity but is occasionally syrupy. The book can be slow, with an over-emphasis on superfluous detail,

perhaps showing off Strauss's extensive research. The narrative suffers and has a noticeable sense of padding.

Strauss's imagination left me uneasy at the assumed validity of what he portrays. This is made even more awkward when you realise that his thoughts are given unworthy credence by the factual skeleton.

With the recent experience of the Maltese conjoined twins being separated and the rarity of the condition, you realise we still know little. I am not sure this book gives us more insight.

Simon Minty
£9.99, Allison and Busby

Turning bathing into a dry subject

In *Bathing – the Body and Community Care*, Julia Twigg delves into "one of the great watersheds of ageing or disability," exploring what it means for people to be assisted in one of the most intimate tasks of life.

The book quotes from careworkers and clients, covering most aspects of the topic.

For one woman her bath was "the rose of my week," while another found that "I don't think that once a week is a sufficient standard of cleanliness." One woman liked to keep her slip on while being

bathed by carers she didn't know, and another pointed out that: "I know they all say: 'Oh, I've seen one body, I've seen them all.' But they haven't seen mine...and it doesn't make you feel any better them saying that." As a woman in her 30s, she linked this embarrassment to her age and identity as a potentially sexually active being.

Like most academic texts, the book tries to be strictly objective and neutral. Yet it isn't. The intimate part of bathing, particularly for younger disabled people who may be more aware of the sexual potential of what is

happening, is barely touched upon. So much more space is given to the reluctance of carers to relate to this part of their clients, that the impression is that the author agrees with this dehumanisation.

In over 200 pages, the disability political perspective on care is given just three. Although the move to direct payments and personal assistants (PAs) is mentioned, the author gives more credibility to the argument that PAs are expected to be slaves than she does to positive reasons for PAs – i.e. that they give disabled people control over their lives.

So much for lack of bias.

Reading this book brought back memories. Nothing to do with the subject, more to do with the style. It is a textbook, not intended to be read for pleasure, just as a source for academic argument.

Intimate involvement of PAs or carers with disabled people, particularly in a physical context, is an entirely valid subject. But it deserves to be addressed in a form which is more accessible than this book – it can then become the subject of healthy debate.

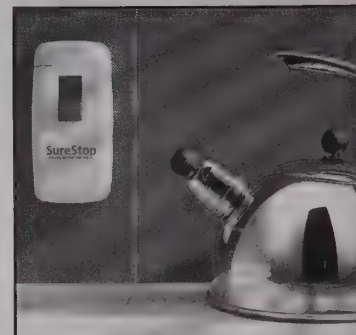
Chris Davies
£15.99, Routledge

Bright ideas

Trendy tots will love Otto Bock's new Italian-designed shoes (*below*) which come in 24 styles, including lace-ups, Velcro fasteners, sturdy boots and trainers. From £45.96, Otto Bock, 32 Parsonage Road, Englefield Green, Egham TW20 0LD, tel: 01784 744900.



Have you ever flooded your kitchen because the stopcock is too hard to turn? Well, help is at hand with the SureStop water switch (*below*). A plumber can quickly fit this easy-to-use switch in an accessible spot. Around £25 from DIY shops. Sure GB, Sure House, Century Park, Starley Way, Bickenhill, Solihull, West Midlands B37 7HF, e-mail: sales@surestop.co.uk



Planning a holiday? Marlene and Trevor Beardmore, of Nottingham, have pointed out that some travel agents inform hotels about guests' needs just a week in advance, when accessible rooms may already have been filled. Even if you book your holiday months in advance you need to check that the agent will contact the hotel early enough for you to get the room you need. Perhaps travel agents will change their policy if enough people nag them.

Watch out for a remote-control alarm system being launched in April. It means you no longer have to key your code into a fiddly control panel inside the house. Contact Geeta Pattni, BOX telematics, 36 Coleshill Industrial Estate, Station Road, Coleshill, North Warwickshire B46 1JT, tel: 01675 434211.

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Should I go to court?

I am having serious problems with my new wheelchair. It cost me £3,545 and I ploughed my retirement savings into this model hoping I might continue being able to work until retirement age.

I have now retired early because of ill health. I sought legal advice but was told that, as the value of the chair was less than £5,000, I would need to go to the small claims court. I am rather frightened of going through this process.

I have been in touch with the local trading standards department, who advised me that, under the Sale of Goods Act 1979, my contract was with the supplier, who is obliged to repair the chair, not the manufacturer. It has recently been repaired yet again, but I wonder how long this will last.

After being in and out of hospital, moving house and being burgled, I feel I cannot go on fighting, but I worked very hard to save that money and am now totally reliant on benefits.

Christine, Gosport

I would suggest that, despite your fears, you consider going to the small claims court to ask their advice.

If you take your claim further you could represent yourself (I am told most people do) and the only immediate cost is a fee which may be about £150. If you won your case this amount would be repaid to you.

If all else fails, publicity works wonders. Your local newspaper may well be interested in the story, particularly the fact that you used your retirement savings to buy this chair. You could say how important it is for you to have the chair to get out and about.

You may feel uncomfortable about twanging the heartstrings, but it could work wonders. All you say in your last paragraph should be emphasised to grab their attention. You also need to say that the least the supplier can do is provide another chair plus some financial compensation.

Go on – have a go!

British Humanist Association, 47 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8SP, tel: 020 7430 0908.

The Dead Good Funerals Book, £11 including p&p, is available from Engineers of the Imagination, Lantern House The Ellers, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0AA, tel: 01229 581127.

DLCC, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester M8 8QA, tel: 0161 834 1044.

The New Natural Death Handbook, £13.50 including p&p, is available from the Natural Death Centre, 20 Heber Road, London NW2 6AA.

ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS



Dear Ann

love and loneliness
bereavement
personal problems
advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is

co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People and other guides*. Write to her at **Disability Now**, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



I want to do it my way

I have a life-limiting disability and know I don't have long to go. I have come to terms with this and am putting my energy into settling my affairs, saying goodbye to friends and arranging my departure in my own style. (I don't much like the word funeral.)

I'm not religious and can't bear the thought of funeral directors adding doom and gloom to the occasion. I know they are doing their best, but their way is not for me.

There must be an alternative for a good send-off. Can you advise me?

Bill, Newcastle

I am glad to tell you that there are quite a few alternatives. A religious ceremony may be common, but it is by no means the only choice. For example, for a fee similar to that paid to a priest for a funeral, you can get a trained officiant from the British Humanist Association.

I would recommend two books. *The Dead Good Funerals Book* I found

entrancing – yes, I mean that. This book will enable you to plan exactly what you want. It clearly tells you what's fixed and what's flexible.

The other book covers similar ground but much more of it. *The New Natural Death Handbook* has information about cemeteries and crematoria; inexpensive, green, family-organised funerals; the law on private land burial; wills, living wills and forms for advance funeral wishes; and mail-order cardboard coffins. It also has a guide to woodland burial grounds where a tree marks the spot rather than a headstone.

You will start a new trend among DN readers!

Advice before buying

My husband has become progressively disabled. I know there are aids which could be useful, but we don't want to waste money. Above all, we don't want to be ripped off by some salesperson making the most of our ignorance.

There is a local shop selling disability equipment, but their stock is limited. I just don't know where to turn for advice.

Margaret, Manchester

It's good to have a question that is easy to answer. In Manchester there is a Disabled Living Centre (DLC) and there you will find all the advice you need from impartial occupational therapists. They prefer it if you book an appointment.

For the benefit of other readers, there is a network of over 40 DLCs across the UK, providing an equipment exhibition/demonstration and information service to disabled people, carers and professionals concerned with care provision. Details are available from the Disabled Living Centres Council (DLCC).

I hear stories about people being conned into buying inappropriate or overpriced equipment and I would advise people to visit a DLC before they buy any aids. DN's recent investigation also gives useful information (see *March issue*).

Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick can give disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, and she has a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.



DN tries to include as much contact information as possible, but space is tight. If you need more details, tel: 020 7619 7323, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

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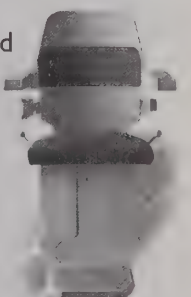
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Hot tips for your summer hols

Need help with this year's summer holiday? Dan Batten has some hints that will assist you on your way

Besides celebrating Easter and filling your face with eggs, April means it's time to book a holiday.

If your disability means you can't just pick one out at the local travel agent and tear off unaided, fear not – there's plenty of help out there to get you to wherever you fancy.

 Whether it's the English countryside or foreign climes that get you going, the people at **Chalfont Line** have a group holiday to suit you, from the chance to enjoy the splendour of Devon and Cornwall to the awesome views of the Rockies in Canada.

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Room with a view: try Can be Done's break to Venice for a romantic getaway

LAURA STRONG


help. All Chalfont itineraries are tailored to suit people who like to take things a bit slower, so you won't have smoke flying off your wheelchair tyres.

Tel: 020 8937 3799, e-mail: holidays@chalfont-line.co.uk, website: www.chalfont-line.co.uk


 If a quick breeze to the **North York Moors National Park** is on the cards, make sure you get hold of a copy of the *Moors 2001* guide. Split into four geographical areas, the guide includes a detailed map, as well as information on activi-

ties and places of interest. It comes with a free accommodation guide to the area, which looks at everything from posh hotels to caravan parks. This goldmine of information is yours for a trifling 50p. *Copies are available from North York Moors Park Authority, tel:*

01439 770657, e-mail: info@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk

 Staying on the **Yorkshire coast** this summer? Visitors to Scarborough, Filey and the surrounding areas should check out the Scarborough and District Disablement Action Group (DAG) guide to accessible holiday accommodation and attractions.

Hotels and self-catering accommodation have been given the once-over and access details are set out clearly using text and symbols. Visitor attractions including Filey Museum and Scarborough Castle are given the same treatment. *Copies cost £1 from DAG, tel/fax/minicom: 01723 379397.*

 If you're keen on setting out to sea for a cruise, make sure the free factsheet for disabled people from the **Cruising Information Service** sails through your door.

It tells you how to book a suitable cruise and what companies can provide in the way of accessible facilities,

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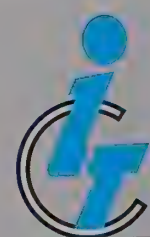
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 For all-round holiday help, how about contacting **Holiday Care Plus**? It offers help with holiday planning and travel arrangements, as well as inspecting accommodation access.

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 Maybe you fancy taking in more than one place on your hols. **Can Be Done** have added three new escorted tours to their 2001 programme which let you take in Niagara and New York, Montreal and Toronto, or New York and Pittsburgh. Highlights include a day looking at Niagara Falls, a visit to the Statue of Liberty and a tour round the NBC TV studios. There's also a choice of holidays to European destinations including Venice, Paris and Amsterdam – places that won't put such a strain on your pocket. Tel: 020 8907 2400 or visit www.canbedone.co.uk



The cruel sea: Anse Cafard's strange and moving monument to sailors wrecked off Martinique's shores in 1830

MARION BULL

A trip to fantasy island

Marion Bull visits exotic Martinique, a Caribbean island full of beauty and history

In Martinique – where they began the beguine – everyone is given a little bottle of coconut punch on arrival and a postcard of exotic flowers in the shape of the island.

But it's very French. You can buy *croissants* in the shops with francs and even euros, and you won't need a visa.

Most tourists head for the volcanic ruins of St Pierre, where Mont Pelée erupted in 1902. Out of 30,000 people, only one man – a prisoner – survived, protected by his cell.

I had come to see the little-known Diamant coast in the south with its coves, fishing villages and *mornes* (conical hills). La Pagerie, birthplace and sugar plantation estate of the Empress Josephine is at Trois-Ilets, just across the bay from the capital, Fort-de-France.

I was surprised to see that my Creole guide, the lovely Mylène, sent by the tourist office, had a blackboard. It was small, but could have been the size of a football pitch for the attention we received, as she wrote squeakily all the way over on the ferry. The years rolled away, and I was back in infants' school, my teeth – what there was of them then –

grating horribly as the chalk shrieked down the slate – I wasn't deaf in those days.

Back in paradise, the worst thing was seeing all those exotic plant names disappear into a pile of dust on my lap – Mylène had brought a board rubber as well. I suggested a more modish way, and we

transported from Normandy, is now a museum. By Josephine's bed are portraits and letters from Napoleon, perhaps telling her Not Tonight – since he was 5,000 miles away.

As we wandered round, Mylène told me she owns a tour company specialising in accessible holidays, offering

Le Diamant rock, rising from the sea, used to be marked on the map as HMS Diamond Rock, like a battleship, when the English loaded it with canons against the French in 1804. Nearby, at Anse Cafard, there is a strange and moving monument to many sailors shipwrecked in 1830 after a local captain and several slaves had attempted a rescue in vain. Just four years ago a group of sculptures representing the drowned men was erected on the beach. The white figures, shoulders arched, stark against an acrylic blue sky, stare out stoically towards the spot where the ship went down.

We finished the tour with an excellent lunch in a typical Creole beachside restaurant, of dasheen (a tropical vegetable) and a spiced, grilled local fish. Fresh it was. If we'd been sitting much nearer the sea it would have jumped back in.

'We passed lush forests of mango and breadfruit, flame trees in blossom, huge trumpet flowers, hibiscus and orchids'

progressed to pen and paper. In my bemusement I had forgotten that I lipread French.

On the road to Trois-Ilets we passed lush forests of mango and breadfruit, flame trees in blossom, huge trumpet flowers, hibiscus and orchids. The postcard was coming to life. The native Carib people named this Madinina, meaning "Island of Flowers." In 1502 when Christopher Columbus arrived, he declared it the most beautiful place on earth. Cole Porter immortalised its music.

Travellers palms grace the ruins of La Pagerie sugar mill. The only part of the house still standing, like a little cottage

accommodation and equipment such as beach wheelchairs, hikers' wheelchairs and adapted tour vehicles. Beach wheelchairs allow users to go into the sea with the aid of very sturdy but lightweight wheels that grip the sand like four-wheel drive space buggies.

The area is full of surprises.

Flights from Heathrow cost around £419 plus tax for one week in June, Brightways, tel: 020 8621 8800.

For accessible holidays in Martinique, e-mail: caribbeanspirit@wanadoo.fr, website:

<http://pro.wanadoo.fr/caribbeanspirit>, fax: 00 596 596 761 926. Royal Olympic Cruises (accessible cabins available), freephone: 0800 358 3535.



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Looking for something special this Easter? Anne Davies has tips for eggs and cakes

Easter eggs all round

As always, there are masses of Easter eggs in the shops. Here are a few unusual ones, including eggs for people with diabetes, organic eggs, gluten and dairy-free eggs and carob eggs. Take your pick!

Lindt has packs of five little yellow chicks in a row or five little rabbits (£1.75 a set). It is also offering five chocolate carrots in a pack (£2). From supermarkets and delicatessens.

Thorntons has a carrot bag filled with mini eggs (£1.99), as well as rabbit lollipops (55p each), individual champagne eggs (45p), a layered football egg (£2.99) and an egg suitable for people with diabetes (£5). www.thorntons.co.uk

Whittard has cute novelties, including Lil Chick, a box of chocolate Easter characters with mini eggs (£3.75). It also has the Space Bunny, with chocolate eggs coated in sugar (£3) and a set of two spiral egg cups with a choice of a bunny or two chocolate eggs (£4). Tel: 0800 0154 394 (calls are

free), www.whittard.com

Green and Black's range of organic eggs include a white chocolate egg, a milk chocolate egg and the vegan Maya Gold egg (£2.49 each). Available in some supermarkets and good health food shops.

For people who need gluten and dairy-free products, D&D Chocolates has a good range

unable to eat chocolate. Mail order, tel: 01509 216400.

Traditional simnel cakes (fruit cakes covered with marzipan and then baked) are on sale in most supermarkets. Marks and Spencer has one at £7.99 and is also offering a rich chocolate cake with a nest and little eggs (£5.99) as well as mini nest cakes (£2.79 for 12).



Indulge yourself: D&D offers dairy-free, gluten-free and carob eggs

including hollow eggs (£3.89) and small bunny shapes (£3.49). The company also offers a carob range if you are

Tesco has a simnel cake (£6.99) and a pretty cake with green icing and spring flowers (£2.99). If you want an easy way to



What bunny brings: Thornton's has chocolate carrots and rabbits

bake an Easter cake yourself, buy a packet of the new Cadbury's Mini Eggs cake mix (£2.99). It makes a rich chocolate cake that you coat with milk chocolate icing and top with a flake nest and mini eggs. Just mix and bake. From supermarkets.

If you're not into chocolate and cake or need an Easter gift, Woods of Windsor is selling a delightful decorated soap tin



(left) holding English soap in the shape of an egg (£3.99).

From good chemists.

Have a happy Easter!

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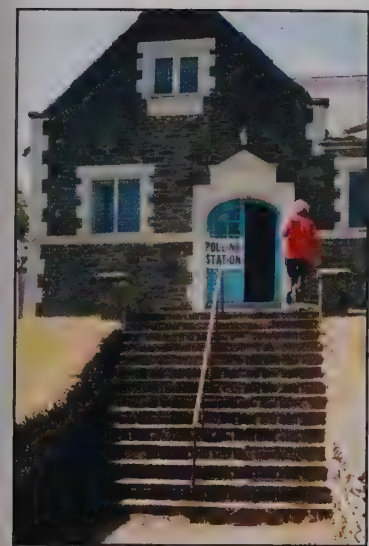
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Access Your Vote

If you want to influence change and hold the UK's democratic system to account here's your opportunity, says Ruth Scott.

Governments have tremendous influence over the lives of all their citizens. But to what extent can disabled people participate in choosing the government that makes decisions on their behalf?

In search of answers, Scope launched *Polls Apart* in 1992. This involved disability



campaigners from across the country joining together to see just how accessible democracy was to disabled people. Active around the time of General Elections, *Polls Apart* is a campaign and survey that aims to identify and tackle the problems disabled people face in trying to access their votes.

Polls Apart 1 (1992) and *Polls Apart 2* (1997) found that 94% of polling stations had one or more barriers to access. The results demonstrated that disabled people really were 'Polls Apart' from the rest of society on polling day and in relation to politics generally. Many disabled people had to vote by post, in the street or were simply turned away.

Polls Apart 3 is the latest stage of this campaign and will focus on the forthcoming General Election in 2001. In 2000, the

Representation of the People Act was passed which addressed many of the recommendations that *Polls Apart 1* and *Polls Apart 2* had made. *Polls Apart 3* will find out if things have really changed. Or whether disabled people still face exclusion and inequality on Election Day 2001.

Taking part in an election is one of the most fundamental expressions of citizenship and freedom within a democracy. This is what makes Polls Apart so vital. Voting is also one of the most potent expressions of a person's freedom to choose. That so many disabled people continue to be denied equal access to the democratic system is evidence that our democracy is failing disabled people.

Polls Apart 3 is a joint project between Scope and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). It aims to assess the



accessibility of as many polling stations as possible on Election Day 2001. This data will then be used to see how accessible the electoral system is to disabled people, and what improvements still need to be made.

In 1997, volunteers surveyed 1,300 polling stations around the country. This time round Scope hopes to involve as many people as possible to help in a survey of more than 3,000 polling stations throughout the UK.

How can you get involved?

The easiest way to get involved in *Polls Apart* is to survey your local polling station when you go to vote on Election Day.

The *Polls Apart* survey form is available on-line from: www.pa3.org.uk Simply fill in your name, e-mail address and

constituency, and then print off the form from the website.

If you don't have access to the internet you can call the *Polls Apart* Hotline on 020 7619 7246. Leave your name, address and constituency on the answerphone and you will receive a survey form in the post. When you've filled in the access survey on Election Day you can either post the form back to:

**Polls Apart 3,
Scope Campaigns,
6 Market Road,
London N7 9PW**

or you can enter the details directly onto the website.

You can also request survey forms by writing to Polls Apart 3 at the above address or by e-mailing campaigns@scope.org.uk

The form is also available in Braille, tape, computer disk and large print.

Campaigning for Change

Hundreds of disabled people, their families and carers are involved in Scope's campaigns for equality.

Liz Daone, Head of Campaigns at Scope, says: "The successes of all Scope's campaigns are dependent on the energy and drive of members of our campaigns network. It is their experiences that drive the campaigns forward."

Recent high profile campaigns include *Within Reach* and *Speak for Yourself*.

Within Reach, a joint campaign by Scope and the National Union of Teachers, has involved disabled children and their families talking to politicians and journalists about their experiences of education. Many of their concerns will be addressed in the new SEN and Disability Bill. New money has been given to schools to make changes so that disabled children are included.

People who use communication aids to speak recently attended a reception at the House of Commons as part of Scope's *Speak for Yourself* campaign. They called upon on the Government to take action so that anybody who needs equipment to help them speak receives it along with training. Since the reception over 85 MP's have expressed their support for the campaign.

Scope will continue to campaign for change until disabled people achieve equality with the same rights and opportunities as everybody else. Its network of campaigners across the country is growing. To find out more about the network call 020 7619 7253 or email: campaigns@scope.org.uk.



Pupils from George's Green School helped launch a new report by Scope and the NUT called 'Within Reach: an evaluation of the schools access initiative'. The report showed that all pupils could benefit from making schools more accessible for disabled pupils.

PHOTO: ADRIAN PROBERT



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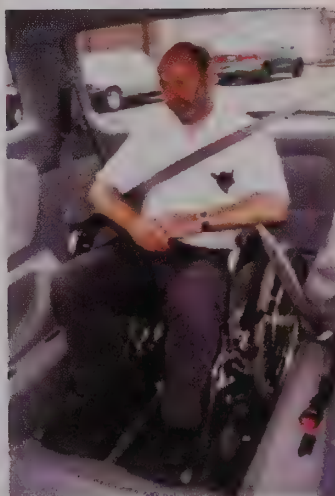


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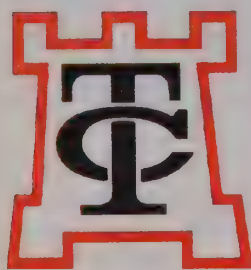


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With home being on the agenda (see page 17), try your hand at this month's DIY wordsearch. Find the following words:

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|-------------|---------------|
| ✕ Brush | ✕ Paint |
| ✕ Carpets | ✕ Paste |
| ✕ Cornice | ✕ Pictures |
| ✕ Curtains | ✕ Plane |
| ✕ DIY | ✕ Plants |
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DN

Candid Dan



Dan reveals a shady taste in music and then tries to pass it off due to illness. Pity *DN* knows better...

This column must be the hardest one I've ever had to write. Why? Because, basically, I've been denied life for the last four weeks, thanks to a dose of the 'flu so strong it would've picked Lennox Lewis up and pummelled him into oblivion. So a mere mortal like me was a sitting duck.

After a few days I looked so rough that Graham decided I needed to visit "Batten Towers" in the country to recuperate. Ma and Pa were only too glad to mop my brow and build me up.

Although my viral visitor was scary, it was nothing compared to the other supreme evil that goes with illness – daytime tv. I found myself watching anything – even Channel 5 seemed vaguely entertaining.

When the lure of telly failed, I turned to music. Having a pretty rocking mum, I had a few Aerosmith albums and the entire back catalogue of the Beatles to listen to. She was rather stunned then when I asked her to buy me a Dolly Parton CD on her trails one day. Dad even went so far as to offer that Foot and Mouth disease had its first human victim.

The only positive factor from this whole debacle was that I didn't spend any money, so my new sofa fund rocketed. I'm having offers of help aplenty from mates: when it comes to choosing my new lounging vessel they want to make sure it is "football friendly" and able to stand hours of slobbery. The only voice of dissent comes from Winz, who likens my old sofa to his bed. Bearing this in mind, I have made him senior advisor when choosing the new one. It pays to have an expert in sloth around at times like these, you know.

• Publication

The Department for Social Security has published *The Pensioners' Guide*, a new booklet with national and local information that can save them money, covering pensions, health, keeping warm, social services and security. Copies at Citizens Advice Bureaux or tel: 0845 606 5065, textphone: 0845 606 4064.

• Regional


SCOVO, the Welsh learning disability standing conference, have published *Too Many Pages*, a guide to involving people with learning disabilities in planning and providing services. Clearly laid out, one half in Welsh, the other English. £7.50 members, £15 (inc p&cp) others. Tel: 029 2049 2443, fax: 029 2048 1043.

• Website


AskMedic is a new website enabling people to get 24-hour medical advice on physical, psychological or sexual queries. For £14.99 a confidential, encrypted medical file is created for each person and a reply is guaranteed within 24 hours by a UK doctor. www.askamedic.com

• Websites

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore, Middlesex, now has a website with information on the hospital's work, contact details and job opportunities. www.rnvh-stanmore.org.uk


 Capability Scotland has launched a new website with easier navigation, the option to subscribe to an electronic

mailing list for regular updates on the site and the children's chatroom Chatability. Plans are afoot for an online forum so visitors can share their views. www.capability-scotland.org.uk

 The National Library for the Blind (NLB) has launched a new link from its website allowing visually impaired people to access an

up-to-date online library catalogue of 40,000 titles. NLB members can check availability, bookmark their selection and e-mail their request to NLB. www.nlbuk.org

Talking Life, the self-help publisher has launched a new website with information on mental health support groups and organisations. www.selfhelporgs.com

 The Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Leeds has launched an electronic archive of writings on disability. www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archive/index.html

Tameside Council's website has a version that's been adapted for blind and visually impaired people who use screen readers. www.tameside.gov.uk/text.htm

The London Mental Health Learning Partnership is a new website allowing mental health professionals and service users in London to share their views and pass on information. www.virtual.org

Spinchair Media is a new website specialising in books and CDs for disabled children and aiming to provide more positive role models in children's literature. www.spinchairmedia.com

Rewind Design is a Cork-based web design company specialising in accessible web pages for disability support groups, organisations and individuals. For more details, tel: +353 21 432 2366, e-mail: info@rewinddesign.com. www.rewinddesign.com

• Publications



 COI Communications have produced the 8th edition of *Public Scene*, giving access to public sector information for hearing impaired people who need BSL or English subtitles. Topics include fire prevention, and the fast track route to receiving disabled person's tax credit if you become disabled whilst working. Free whilst stocks last. Contact Euroview Management Services, PO Box 35, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7EX.

bild The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) has published *Social and Personal Relationships*, aimed at providing guidance for staff working with adults who have learning disabilities. It has also published an *Easy Guide to the Human Rights Act*, giving the Act's implications for people with learning disabilities. *Social and Personal Relationships* is £12 plus 60p p&p per copy. *Easy Guide to the Human Rights Act* is £8 plus 40p per copy. Write to BILD Publications, Plymbridge Distributors, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PZ, tel: 01752 202301.

The Centre for Accessible Environments has published *Bringing the DDA to Life for Small Shops* – a series of free guides offering access information for newsagents, clothes shops, cafés and hairdressers. Available in English and Welsh from the Disability Rights Commission helpline, tel: 0845 762 2633, minicom: 0845 762 2644.

 Contact a Family has published the *Directory of Specific Conditions and Rare Disorders 2001*, the



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For a sign language interpreted, captioned and narrated video with information of the forthcoming season, our large print newsletter or more information call Pat Colcutt on 020 7382 7118 or e-mail access@rsc.org.uk

RSC IMAGE: DETAIL OF HAMLET SCULPTURE BY GREG WYATT, COMMISSIONED BY THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST. SWAN PHOTOGRAPH BY LORENZ GULLACHSEN



• Publications

tenth edition of the publication. It has information on around 270 conditions, with medical descriptions and details of support organisations. £30 including p&p, contact Yvonne McGahren, tel: 020 7383 3555, e-mail: yvonne@cafamilly.org.uk Online access is available through www.cafamilly.org.uk



CMT International UK, a support group for people with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, has published *Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease – A Practical Guide*, aimed at people with the condition and health professionals. £10 (inc p&p, cheques payable to CMT International UK), write to Margaret Read, 121 Lavernock Road, Penarth CF64 3QG.

Brasshouse Publications has launched *Tell All - A Guide to Inclusive Communications*, a practical guide to help service providers communicate. The publication has information on preparing text for Braille printing, commissioning sign language or foreign language interpreters, use of telephones and user-friendly web pages. £7 plus £3 p&p, Brasshouse Publications, 50 Sheepcote Street, Birmingham B16 8AJ.

• Regional



The Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living has moved to Park Road, Ripley DE5 3EF, tel: 01246 865305, fax: 01246 861774, website: www.dcil.org.uk

Eagling-Elrey, a Stevenage-based recruitment agency, has a new division to promote job opportunities for disabled

Naidex at the NEC

Need information to help you live an independent life? Then head to Naidex at the NEC, Birmingham.

Over 200 companies will be there, allowing you to compare the performance and cost of hundreds of useful products.

A range of educational seminars will be held over the three days. Free to visitors, they will range from *Successful Business Ideas* by Joe Rajko, the internet entrepreneur and winner of Channel 4's *emillionaire* (see *Profile on page 15*), to *Managing Arthritis*.

The *Disability Now*-sponsored New Product Showcase will once again be there (see *page 8* for details).

For free advance tickets, tel: 0870 429 4428, fax: 0870 429 4429, e-mail: lindsay.craig@ctsnet.co.uk. Free parking for orange badge holders. Wheelchair hire from MBS Discount Wheelchairs, tel: 01704 50161 – call in advance.

people. Tel: 01438 221221, e-mail: otto2@ntlworld.com

The Frida Network is a new London project supporting disabled women with gynaecological health needs. It also provides free, accessible training for disabled women who want to set up self-help groups. Full details, tel: 020 7251 6333, minicom: 020 7490 5489, e-mail: outreach@womenshealthlondon.org.uk, helpline: 020 7251 6580 (weekdays 9.30am-1.30pm).



PosAbility aims to bridge the gap between employers and disabled job applicants in the Leicestershire area. It is looking for disabled people who are searching for work and for employers wanting to recruit more people with disabilities. Write to PosAbility, 60 Charles

15-17 May
NEC Birmingham



SharCARE receive their New Product Showcase award from Tanni Grey-Thompson at last year's show

Street, Leicester LE1 1FB, tel/minicom: 0116 248 9480, e-mail: posabilityltd@aol.com.



Northamptonshire Council for Disabled People (NCDP) have published their third *Directory of Services*. With information for younger physically disabled people, it includes support at home, residential/nursing/respite care, day centres and useful contacts. Free (£2.50 p&p) from NCDP, 13 Hazelwood Road, Northampton NN1 1LG, tel/minicom: 01604 624088.

• What's on

Disability alliance

Disability Alliance has a training programme that runs from April to November, aimed at training advisers and those needing disability benefits expertise. The programme includes: *Personal Capability Assessment*, 19 April; *Back to Work Benefits*, 22 May; *Community Care and the Law*, 2 October; and *Disability Benefits for Young People*, 27 November. In-house training can also be organised. For a full list of courses, tel: 020 7247 8776, fax: 020 7247 8765, or visit www.disabilityalliance.org



The Stroke Association will hold eight information days, 5 April-23 May, across the country, for NHS practitioners/managers/nurses and social services staff. They are tying in with the launch of the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People, looking at the new NSF requirements for stroke care, as well as how the Association can support the change, research and role of social services. Full details, tel: 01604 623935



The Mental Health Foundation is organising *Mental Health Action Week*, 16-22 April. The Foundation will launch the results of a survey into mental health, stigma and friendship on 17 April and workplace stress and the impact on companies on 19 April. Local groups will be organising events and exhibitions aimed at improving mental health services across the UK. For more details and a *Mental Health Week Action Pack*, tel: 020 7535 7422, e-mail: mhf@mhf.org.uk



The Residential Care Show, which includes a conference, exhibition and workshops for owners, managers and care staff in care homes, takes place 17-19 April, London. For more information, tel: 01733 576521, fax: 01733 579264, e-mail: events@irvineassociates.co.uk, website: www.residentialcareshow.co.uk

Changing Direction?, a seminar on becoming a freelance consultant in the voluntary and non-profit making sector, is being held on 2 May at the Charity Centre, London. Six experts will give advice on subjects including legal aspects, accounting issues, how charities employ consultants and self-motivation. Costs and details, tel: 01785 256175, e-mail: amanda@wootton-george.co.uk

Glasgow gets independence

Independent Living Scotland, an independent lifestyle event, will take place at the SECC, Glasgow.

25-26 April, 2001
SECC Glasgow

POST STUDIOS LIMITED



Now in its 3rd year, the show is a major showcase in Scotland for new and innovative products and services for disabled and elderly people, their carers and professionals.

As in previous years, a wide range of equipment will be on display, ranging from every day household items to more specialised products and services.

There will be consumer and professional seminars tackling a

range of issues, including *How to Adapt your Home – the Adaptations Manual*, *Play for Disabled Children*, *The Future of Equipment Services* and *OT – our joint future – the integration of health and social services*.

New for 2001 is the New Product Launch theatre and back by popular demand is the mobility test track, help and information point and the Relaxation Zone.

For advance free tickets call the hotline, tel: 0870 429 4372, or fax: 020 7874 0313, e-mail: pippa.williams@emap.com. For travel advice call Tripscope, tel: 0845 758 5641.

Looking for a change of direction?

Fee paid foster carer

Jamie (8.5.86) is a bright, lively boy with a great sense of fun. He needs long term carers who will care for him into adulthood and beyond, and can support him in planning his future.

Jamie has cerebral palsy. He is a wheelchair user and requires total support with his physical care. Jamie can operate his indoor chair and his computer, and although his speech is impaired he can make his needs known. A specially adapted vehicle would be available for Jamie's use.

Jamie currently attends school in North Hertfordshire where he is a weekly boarder – Monday to Friday. He needs either carers who are able to look after him at weekends, during school holidays and if he is off school during term time, or who could care for him full-time whilst he attends school as a day pupil. Jamie will need to stay in contact with various family members.

We would be prepared to fund all adaptations necessary or alternatively provide a suitable property rent free. Suitable carers would be paid a generous salary.

If you feel you could make a long term commitment to Jamie and would like to learn more please contact:

Zena Balsom – Social Worker
Family Placement Team
Hertfordshire County Council
16 Warren Park Road
Bengeo
Hertford
SG14 3JD
(t) 01992 509437



Disability**NOW** lineage

tel: 020 7619 7320, fax: 020 7619 7331,
minicom: 020 7619 7332,
e-mail: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

• Personal

DISABLED GAY GENTLEMAN, lonely, early fifties, lives in West Yorkshire, seeks similar penfriends, fun and friendship, any age. Likes theatre, cinema, music and dining out. Non-scene. Box No. 89

HI, I'M CHRIS. I'm female, 26, have cp. Quad w/chair user, bit young for my age? I like football, computers, swimming, music, holidays. I would like any age m/f to write to and maybe get together with. Essex/E. London. Box No. 90

I AM FEMALE, mid 50s. I have ms and consequent mobility problems. I enjoy music, travel, literature. I love life and wltm a man to share it with. Box No. 91

VERY ATTRACTIVE MEDITERRANEAN looking lady, slim, sporty, partially sighted, seeks caring gentleman who enjoys sport, n/s, 35-52, for a committed relationship. Photo please. London. Box No. 92

LADY, HEARING AND visually impaired, seeks new male and female friends in London, 35-55, for sports, walks, meals out and socialising. Driving ability useful. Box No. 93

I AM AN attractive young lady, 34, living at the Cheshire Home with 21 other people. I had an accident in 1985 sustaining head injuries. I now use a wheelchair and have some speech difficulties but can communicate. I enjoy socialising and modern music. I smoke, but only in the evenings. I wltm someone for companionship and possible future romance. Box No. 94

GAY GUY, 47, slightly impaired, seeking other disabled guys for friendship. Hoping also to find a partner. Into music, travel and socialising. Own home, car. Box No. 95

LONELY LADY, 42, seeks a kind man who will make me happy. We could socialise together and have fun with a view to friendship that might lead to a relationship. Any area. Box No. 96

PETITE BLONDE, 30, wheelchair user, gsoh, own car and works full-time. Hobbies include music, reading, writing, cinema, dining out. Seeks kind, sincere guy, 30-40, able-bodied/disabled, for friendship. Photo required. Box No. 97

HI, I'M SIMON, 33 years old, with a gsoh. My hobbies are music, travel, cinema, socialising and football. I have cp. I work full-time, and have my own car and bungalow. Wltm female, 25+, with similar interests. I live in the Surrey area. Box No. 98

COULD YOU BE my caveman? I'm a lonely cavewoman in my mid 50s. I rent my own cave, I like reading, acting, travelling and meeting other tribe people. I've got good old fashioned values. I wltm a cavemate who has similar values and interests. Box No. 99

SINGLE MALE, 35, seeks intelligent lady, any age, race or disability for friendship or relationship. Remember this advert some years ago. Promise to reply to previous/new respondents. Oxfordshire based, can travel. Box No. 100

• Cars/vans

DAIHATSU HI-JET, 1250cc, diesel, 1997, R reg, with clamps, seat belts and ramps for wheelchair. 12k miles, excellent condition. £4,000 ovno. Tel: 01429 880983.

FORD COURIER COMBI diesel, 1996, Brotherwood conversion. Very economical, blue, good condition with ramp. Upholstery mint condition. £7,000. Tel: 01226 752531.

CARMOBILITY ROTATING FRONT passenger seat for Ford Mondeo. Cost £630, bargain at £330. Tel: 01450 371197 (Hawick).

FORD ESCORT 1.4 LX, P reg, only 4.5k miles. Constables chairlift system, passenger seat including wheelchair, 12 months MOT. £8,500 ono. Tel: 01787 374605 (evenings).

MERCEDES VITO 108D, 2.3, diesel, 1998, blue, R reg, 40k miles, lowered rear entrance with ramp. Wheelchair passenger sits alongside driver, can also carry 3 other passengers. £11,750. Tel: 01738 636080.

CHAIRMAN KANGOO 1.2 petrol, V reg (Oct '99), 21k miles, power steering, 4 seats plus wheelchair. Radio cassette and wheelchair security system. Rear shallow ramped access, electric pull-in straps for easy loading. Conversion has 3 year warranty. A super vehicle for use with or without a wheelchair, with excellent visibility for all passengers. £8,250 ono. Tel: 01425 614501 (New Milton, Hants).

CHAIRMAN ESCORT 1.3, auto, low mileage, MOT. 3 seats plus wheelchair, hydraulic lowering rear and ramp. £1,950. Tel: 020 8850 2280.

NISSAN PRAIRIE 2.0 SLX, J reg, blue, 63k miles. Brotherwood raised roof, wheelchair conversion. Front passenger seat swivels for easy access. Pas, electric windows, fsh. £9,500. Also, Rea Comfort electric wheelchair, controls on bar at back. Half price at £1,400. Both items negotiable. Tel: 01392 382116 (day), 01392 811285 (other times).

NISSAN PRAIRIE SLX estate, 1992, converted for wheelchair access, 2-tone grey, immobiliser, electric front windows. £3,200. Tel: 01372 372010 (Leatherhead).

VW CADDY, G REG, red, 40k miles, MOT expires August 2001, electric ramp, vgc. £3,495. Tel: 020 8656 1733.

RENAULT CLIO, AUTOMATIC, 1993. As new, 3k miles only. MOT expires Aug '01. Conventional and hand controlled, hoist for chair/scooter in boot. Power steering. £5,250 ono. Tel: 01225 311340 (Bath).

VW CARAVELLE 1900 turbo, diesel, 8 seater or 6 seater plus wheelchair. N reg, very low mileage, wheelchair access ramp, seat belt and securing straps, 12 months' MOT. £9,500 ono. Tel: 01582 462565.

CHAIRMAN ESCORT VAN, 1.3, green, M reg. Good condition, low mileage. £6,000. Tel: 020 8988 0976.

CHAIRMAN SEAT VAN, 1990. 36k miles, Good condition. £1,600 ono. Tel: 01834 861711 (Pembrokeshire).

FORD TRANSIT VAN 2.5 diesel, automatic. Drive from wheelchair, metallic green, N reg, alloy wheels, electric windows, air conditioning, stereo and CD. Electric tiedown, accelerator/brake, gears, door and lift with remote control. Horizontal steering, fsh, good condition. £11,500 ono. Tel: 0115 978 4032 or 0778 511 5926.

TOYOTA HIACE POWERBUS blue, N reg, 1996, 46k miles, MOT December. Electric wheelchair lift, extra (removable) seat, carpeted. 3 front seats, central locking, radio/cassette, tinted windows. £10,000. Photos at www.kerioakdobes.btinternet.co.uk/toyota.htm or tel: 01435 882572.

NISSAN PRAIRIE, G REG, light blue. Low level ramped entrance from rear, automatic transmission, 127k miles, full tax and MOT. £4,000 ono. Tel: 029 2075 7546.

RATCLIFFE 302 WHEELCHAIR lift, 10 years' old, fully functioning and in good condition. Would suit minibus. Cost £3,000 new, will accept £500 ono. Call Rob, tel: 01923 463844 (Watford).

ROVER 216 GTI 3-door hatchback, K reg, 31k miles. Complete with integral Constables electric wheelchair. Bereavement sale. Offers in the region of £4,000. Tel: 01787 373444.

FORD ESCORT ESTATE 1.4L, F reg, 42k miles, MOT October, 3 doors, blue. Vgc, fitted with cowalls and hand controls. £1,250 ono. Tel: 01258 455197.

MAZDA 323, AUTO, F reg. With top box, hoist for manual wheelchair. £2,000 ono. Tel: 01353 648979.

MILFORD ELECTRIC CAR LIFT Lifts person from wheelchair to car, operated by disabled person or not. Fits passenger or driver's side, operates from 12 volt car battery, have relevant papers. Sling unused, lift used only 6 weeks due to bereavement. Cost £1,800, accept £1,000 ono. Tel: 01328 820064.

SEAT TERRA KOMBI, 1992, 35k miles, MOT Oct' 2001. Rear ramp, electric winch for wheelchair, vgc. £1,950. Tel: 0151 652 6475 (Merseyside).

CHAIRMAN ESCORT, REAR ramp, low mileage, MOT October. Excellent condition. £2,950 ono. Tel: 0191 521 4641.

FORD GALAXY GLX, 2.0 ltr, silver, 13k miles, auto, air conditioning, 1996, P reg, fsh. Brotherwood conversion, ramp at back for wheelchair. £15,995. Tel: 01993 878309.

CHAIRMAN ESCORT K REG, 52k miles, 4 seat plus wheelchair, hydraulic ramp, MOT expires November. Vgc, £4,900 ono. Tel: 020 8591 6498 or 020 8594 6158 (Barking).

CONSTABLES ATTENDANT PASSENGER carchair, only used a few times. New £4,800, will accept £2,500. For more details, tel: 01787 473382.

• Wheelchairs/scooters

CLASSIC ROYALE ELECTRIC wheelchair, dual control, new Feb' 1999. Hardly used, includes charger, poncho tray and seatbelts. £1,700 ono. Tel: 07773 708221 or 07971 518345.

4-WHEEL ELECTRIC SCOOTER Horizon Aztec 6, Sungift Cougar 18519. Purchased new July 2000 and only used for 3 months. With stick holder, heavy duty cover and battery charger. Immaculate condition. £3,000 ono. Tel: 01483 225410.

3-WHEEL POWERCHAIR, Pride Celebrity, less than 1 year old. Good condition, mains rechargeable. Folds into car boot. £1,250. Tel: 07970 523433 (Glos/Worcs).

STORM S ELECTRIC wheelchair, suitable for the beach and rough terrain. Hardly used. £2,500. Tel: 01626 873963 (West Country).

MINI POWERCHAIR, JAZZY 1103 for indoor and garden mobility, with off-board charger, nearly new. £1,295 ono. Tel: 01628 484664 (South Bucks).

QUICKIE REVOLUTION 17in seat, fully adjustable, folding angle adjustable backrest. Crutch holder and backpack. Folds flat – ideal for travelling. Cost £1,400 new. Only used during two holidays. Immaculate condition, as new. Accept £600. Tel: 020 7702 4986.

BOOSTER SCOOTER, 4-WHEEL, red. As new, £1,400. Tel: 01256 352689 (evenings).

CHEETA ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR G24SR Pro, black, Recaro adjustable seat, grey, lights, indicators, hooter, kerb climber, 6mph, 5-speed, key lock, battery charger, regularly serviced. Little used, goes over rough ground, good condition. Cost £4,950, asking £2,250. Buyer collects. Tel: 01842 878221 (Norfolk).

NEWTON VIXEN CUB, electric powered, indoor wheelchair. Upholstered back and seat (16in wide x 17in), swing-away foot rests, charger. Brand new and unused. Cost £2,100 in December 2000. Bargain at £995. Tel: 01923 350804 (Watford).

• Household/family

RISER RECLINER ELECTRIC armchair, Dralon, standard size. £215. Tel: 020 8500 3329.

• Wanted

FOR 2 WEEKS May, June or Sept, 2 bedroomed wheelchair accessible accommodation either in Costa Blanca, Benidorm area or Tunisia, Sousse, Hammon-Sousse, Port El Kantoui area. E-mail: legsandwheels@aol.com, tel: 01708 348888.

BOAT LOADING RAMPS suitable for wheelchair access. Can collect. Tel: 01726 844448 (Cornwall).

SWIVEL PASSENGER SEATS for Montego and Metro cars. Elap make or similar. Tel: 01278 423255.

• Combined

QUICKIE ACTION WHEELCHAIR, £350 ono. Also J2 cushion 16in x 14in, £50. Also, Carmobility passenger seat, 180° swivel, £400. Tel: 01420 88779 (after 6pm).

VW CARAVELLE, V REG 2.4 TDI, 25k miles. Air conditioning, power steering, central locking, radio cassette player. Fsh, warranty until Sept '02. Invatravel conversion for one wheelchair, Ricon lift. Seats seven people or six plus wheelchair. Cost £27,000, accept £12,000. Wessex through-floor lift, cost £8,000, accept £2,000 ono. Symmetrikit armchair, suitable for disabled child, fully adjustable to all positions. £100. Kingkraft Hi-Lift bath with spa jets. Fully padded, hardly used, cost £4,000, accept £2,000. Theraposture bed, fully adjustable with massage and padded sides. Cost £4,000, accept £1,000. Tel: 01689 855322.

POWERTEC F50 SUPERB outdoor wheelchair, excellent condition £3,000, now £1,000. Quickie 2 lightweight wheelchair, cost £1,400, now £500. Powertec F16 power unit to fit Quickie2, unused, £1,000. Levo stand-up powered wheelchair, excellent condition, £750. Carmobility passenger swing seat, 180° model with Recaro seat, fits most cars, cost £1,800, now £750. Pegasus Cairwave mattress – the perfect answer to pressure sores, top of the range model, fully guaranteed to Feb' 2002, cost £4,600, now £2,000. Mangar pillow lift, air powered, excellent, was £500, now £250. 2 commodes, portable, gives holiday independence, £80. Second is a very attractive tapestry chair, £65. Tel 01730 893486 (Hants).

Classified lineage advertisements

Linage styles

EXAMPLE OF standard lineage advert. Cost: £6 per line. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF semi-display lineage advert. Cost: £6 per line plus £10. Tick box below.

EXAMPLE OF box lineage advert. Cost: £6 per line plus £20. Tick box below.

Choose an advert style from far right. Send this coupon with your name, address, daytime telephone number and a cheque for the total made payable to Disability Now to: 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

DN reserves the right to edit advertisements if necessary. Completion of this form does not guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Sorry no refunds. DN is a non-profit making newspaper.

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

☐ Standard lineage advert

☐ Semi-display lineage advert

☐ Box lineage advert

• Recruitment (on pages 41 to 46)

KINGSTON ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE (KADP)

Project Researcher (6 month project)
Consultancy fee - £12,000

A Project Researcher is required to investigate extending independent living opportunities for people with learning disabilities across Kingston and Richmond. This will involve:

- Developing community support services for people with learning disabilities;
- Review the scope and effectiveness of existing support services;
- Develop proposals for improving independent living opportunities.

The post holder will need to have a thorough understanding of direct payments and the philosophy of independent living along with a commitment to the social model of disability. Ideally you will have experience of research or project work.

For further details and an application form (please state preferred format) telephone Robert on 020 8255 2444, fax: 020 8255 2441, e-mail: eddie_kadp@yahoo.com, or write to: KADP, Siddeley House, 50 Canbury Park Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6LX.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 25 April 2001
Flexible working arrangements will be agreed at interview.

KADP is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from disabled people.

This project is funded by the Royal Borough of Kingston.



• For sale

PRE-OWNED & DEMONSTRATOR WAV'S FOR SALE

VW Transporter 800S 1.9, turbo diesel, 2000 V, 10k miles, green. Lowered floor, WAV conversion (demonstrator)	£16,995
Renault Kangoo 1.9, diesel, 1998 S, white. Full lowered floor, WAV conversion (new)	£8,995
Citroen Berlingo 1.9, diesel, 1997 P, white. Full lowered floor, WAV conversion	£7,295
VW Caravelle 2.0, petrol, 1993 L, red. Side entry wheelchair access	£6,250
Nissan Vanette/Serena 2.3, diesel, 1997 P, Gowrings lowered floor, WAV conversion	£8,995
Ford Courier 1.8, diesel, 1997 R, 18k miles, white. New lowered floor, WAV conversion	£10,495
Renault Extra 1.9, diesel, 1995 M, white. Lowering suspension, lowered floor and raised roof	£5,995
VW Transporter SWB 1.9, turbo diesel, 1995 M, green. 4 pass', driver and w/chair, WAV con'	£9,750
Mercedes Vito 108D 2.3, diesel, 1998 R, 29k miles, white. Lowered rear entrance with ramp, wheelchair passenger sits alongside driver, 3 passengers and driver	£13,750
Austin/Rover Montego 2.0, LXI, 1994 M, estate, auto, only 55k miles, very clean. Fitted with hand controls and chair topper roof top wheelchair stowage box	£3,495
Peugeot Expert 1.9, diesel, 1996 P, white. Full lowered floor, WAV conversion	£9,695
1 year old Kangoo cars, WAVs	£POA

All the above vehicles come with our Comprehensive Used Vehicle Warranty

95 Bonnygate, Cupar, Fife KY15 4LG
Tel: (01334) 657722, fax: (01334) 657711,
e-mail: sales@gleneaglesconversions.co.uk
website: www.gleneaglesconversions.co.uk

Gleneagles
Conversions Ltd

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES FOR SALE

1999 T Renault Trafic, diesel, 14k miles, air conditioning	£10,750
1998 S Ford Courier, auto, 10.5k miles, by Universal Mobility	£10,500
1997 R Fiat Fiorino, 16k miles, low floor, by Universal Mobility	£7,250
1997 P Toyota Power Van, diesel, tail lift, 46k miles	£9,995
1997 P Nissan Vanette Cruiser, lowered floor, 24k miles	£8,995
1996 N VW Caravelle, petrol, 1 owner, 63k miles, tail lift	£9,995
1996 N Ford Courier, auto, 1 owner, 5k miles, by Poynting	£8,250
1992 K Rover Metro Chairman, auto, 10k miles	£3,995
1990 G Ford Escort Chairman, lowering suspension, 14k miles	£4,495
Nissan Vanette Cargo Versa and Cruiser	Choice of 5

A selection of 35 WAVs from £2,750 fully serviced with warranty. Demo and delivery anywhere in UK mainland free. Part exchange and vehicles sought for purchase.

CLARKE MOBILITY
SNODLAND, KENT

01634 243596
www.gfclarke.co.uk

• Help

HAVE YOU BEEN discriminated against at work because of your disability? If so, a legal research student would like to hear from you. Please write with details of your experience to the following address: LLM Research, c/o 4 Twickenham Court, off Midland Road, Bradford BD8 7BL. Confidentiality will be respected. Thanks.

I AM A university student requesting help with my project researching how spasticity affects the quality of life of people with spinal cord injuries. The research will involve a short questionnaire which I can e-mail. Thank you. Please contact me at tees_study@hotmail.com

• Trikes/bikes

WRK SUPA TRICYCLE, adjustable support frame and foot clamp. Suits disabled child 11+, vgc. £125. Tel: 01603 457273.

• Accommodation

EAST DEVON NATIONAL award-winning barn conversion. 3 beds, 2 bath, sleeps 6. ETB Grade 2 accommodation. Open plan sitting/dining kitchen (52m square). Patio garden, fabulous views over lake and rolling hills. £149,000. Tel: 01395 567037.

Other linage ads

Personal ads: £10
Help ads: £15 for a
private individual,
£30 for organisations

• Conferences

CONFERENCE ON ACCESS IN 21st CENTURY PLYMOUTH

Speakers and workshops on:

- Access to health • Access to the arts • Access to transport
- Access to education • Access to employment

To be opened by:

George MacPherson
Chair, Independence South West

To be held on:

17th July 2001

To be held at:

The Goschen Business Communication Centre, Saltash Road,
Keyham, Plymouth.

For further details or registration forms contact Independence South West,
tel: 01752 350005 or fax: 01752 368104



UK DISABILITY FORUM FOR EUROPE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

announces
a disabled women's conference on violence and abuse.

When: Saturday 7 July 2001

Time: 10am - 4pm

Where: NCVO, Regent's Wharf
8, All Saints Street
London N1 9RL (fully accessible)

Speakers include:

Anne Pridmore, Chair UK Disability Forum for Europe - *Setting the Scene*
Angie Marriott, *Female Genital Mutilation*
Nasa Begum (to be confirmed)

Workshops: *Violence & Abuse* (Anne Pridmore & Nasa Begum - tbc)
Female Genital Mutilation (Angie Marriott)
Disabled Women - Genetics and Human Rights (Rachel Hurst)

Cost: £5 towards lunch.
To register, or for more information contact
Anne Pridmore, tel: 01858 465416,
mobile: 07968 489139,
e-mail: a.pridmore@scopeem.co.uk

ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE FORUM ON LEARNING DISABILITY
ONE DAY CONFERENCES - 2001

At: The Royal Society of Medicine. 1 Wimpole Street. London W1G 0AE

Thursday April 26th 2001: MORE MEDICAL ISSUES IN DOWN'S SYNDROME

This conference focuses on disorders which are overrepresented in people with Down's syndrome, are less frequently recognised, and have potentially serious clinical consequences. It consists of a series of overview and up-date presentations by experts in the field, each followed by ample discussion time.

Blood diseases in children with Down's syndrome: overview and update

Professor Judith Chessells, Professor of Haematology, Institute of Child Health, London

Type 1 diabetes and other autoimmune disorders in Down's syndrome

Dr Julian Shield, Consultant & Senior Lecturer in Child Health, University of Bristol

Gastrointestinal disorders in people with Down's syndrome: an overview

Dr Charlie Charlton, Consultant Paediatric Gastroenterologist, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham

Respiratory disorders in Down's syndrome: overview and diagnostic and treatment options

Dr Iolo Doull, Consultant Respiratory Paediatrician, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff

Sleep related upper airway obstruction in Down's syndrome: diagnostic approaches and treatment

Dr Martin Samuels, Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics, Keele University, Staffordshire

Thursday May 3rd 2001: PREVENTION AND DISABILITY: Biological, ethical and social concerns

Iodine deficiency - progress towards global elimination of a preventable cause of brain damage

Dr Basil Hetzel, Chairman, International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders, Australia

Folic acid and the prevention of neural tube defects

Professor Nicholas Wald, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, London

Down's syndrome: psychological consequences for parents of antenatal screening programmes

Professor Theresa Marteau, Psychology and Genetics Research Group, Guy's, King's and St Thomas School of Medicine, London

The environmental threat to human intelligence

Dr Christopher Williams, Education and International Development, Institute of Education, London

The disabled person's perspective

Dr Tom Shakespeare, Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences Research Institute, University of Newcastle

Issues for people from ethnic minorities

Dr Karl Atkin, Centre for Research in Primary Care, University of Leeds

Responses of parents towards a screening programme for Fragile X syndrome

Mrs Barbara Carmichael, Mothercare Unit of Clinical Genetics, Institute of Child Health, London

Registration fees for the above: (includes coffee, lunch and tea) RSM Fellows and Forum members £30.00; Non-Fellows, Non-Forum members £60.00.

A special student/unwaged fee may be available on personal application.

Further information: Programme and booking forms are available on www.rsm.ac.uk or from Deborah Johns, Forum Administrator, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE,

tel: 020 7290 2984, fax: 020 7290 2989, e-mail: Learning.disability@rsm.ac.uk

Forthcoming conferences:

Wednesday 18 July 2001: COMPETENCE, SUPPORT & MEANINGFUL OCCUPATION IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Addresses issues of competence and intellectual disability from a historical and philosophical perspective. Highlights innovative practice during the last 10 years with regard to competence and choice in everyday life, employment and leisure.

Thursday 11 October 2001: THE LEARNING DISABILITY NURSE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A practice driven conference which explores a range of current initiatives by learning disability nurses who are working in partnership with other healthcare professionals to improve the healthcare of people with learning disability.

Thursday 6 December 2001: SLEEP DIFFICULTIES IN PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITY

Sleep and its measurement; specific patterns of sleep disorder in people with learning disability; implications for daily living and learning; intervention/management strategies.

Further information: from Deborah Johns, as above.



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Cockerham Sands is an established holiday venue situated by the side of Morecambe Bay that caters for the lovers of caravan holidays. The site is fully wheelchair accessible and contains all you need to make your holiday complete

The caravan is fully adapted for wheelchairs and sleeps a maximum of nine people. For a brochure contact:

Thrift Charitable Trust

87 Duke Street, Barrow in Furness

Cumbria. LA14 1RH

Tel: 01229 820562

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BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Continued on page 42

• Holidays

NAISH HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Cliff-top park with "excellent" status. New Milton, Hampshire. Excellent site facilities within 100 yards, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, two bedroom, fully wheelchair accessible log cabin accommodation. Sleeps 6. Well furnished. Free club membership.

GRANGE COURT HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Park with "good" status. Goodrington Sands, Devon. Excellent site facilities within short walk, with indoor/outdoor pools, restaurant, bar, take-away. Fully equipped, 2 bedroom, fully wheelchair accessible mobile home. Sleeps 4-6, well appointed. Free club membership. (Purchased with funds from the National Lottery).

MILDENREATH HOLIDAY VILLAGE: Excellent seaside site with good facilities, just outside Looe in Cornwall. Restaurant, clubhouse, indoor pool. Fully equipped and wheelchair accessible 2 bedroom chalet accommodation. Sleeps 6 - well furnished and comfortable. Free club membership.

Details: Mr P Cash, tel: (01425) 672055 Bournemouth Spina Bifida Association. Registered Charity No. 261914.

ODDICOMBE HALL HOTEL
Provides an excellent holiday for the disabled person and their family. We have full disabled facilities and are able to cater for organised parties. All wheelchair accessible rooms open on to a private garden with conservatory and have breathtaking sea views. Private car park with unloading at entrance to the hotel. Open all year.

Why not escape and relax at delightful Babbacombe, Torquay? Category 2.

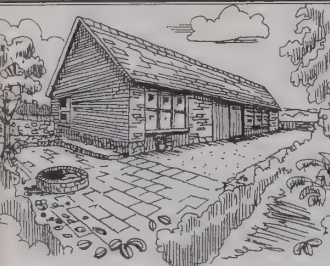
Special 3-4 day breaks Nov-April. Discount for group bookings. Tel: (01803) 313457.

Bramble Cottage - The Black Isle, 5 mins drive Inverness.
Beautifully equipped, Tourist Board 3 stars with Disability Award 2.

1 double, 1 twin, both ensuite. Situated on a working croft amid lovely scenery with wildlife park close by. Moray Firth dolphins, kites, buzzards, deer etc, and our Nessie! Inverness offers good food, cinema, theatre etc.

Brochure/details: tel: 01463 731455, website: www.culbincrothouse.co.uk, e-mail: info@culbincrothouse.co.uk

Shaftesbury, Dorset. Award winning holiday cottages. cat 1, 2 and 3. Working family farm in beautiful countryside. "Best views in Dorset", tremendous character, log fires, C.H. old beams. Accessible swimming, some aids and support services available. Colour brochure. Mrs Sue Smart, Hartgrove Farm, Hartgrove, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0JY, tel: 01747 811830, fax: 01747 811066, e-mail: cottages@hartgrovefarm.co.uk www.hartgrovefarm.co.uk



Take a break at Jay's Barn
Jay's Barn has been specifically designed & rebuilt for disabled people. Beautifully situated in its own grounds/garden. Easy access to Alton Towers, Peak District, The Potteries, or enjoy a visit to one of the level routes in the locality.

£130-£200 per week. Also short-term lets. 1 double bedroom, single wheelchair users welcome. Payphone, no smoking, no pets, linen included.

Ring Christine Babb on 01889 507444.
Jay's Barn, Bradley in the Moors, near Alton, Staffordshire Moorlands ST10 4DF.

The Pines, Bishop's Castle
offers self-catering holiday accommodation in an attractive and recently refurbished, specially adapted house in the south Shropshire countryside. The accommodation is suitable for families and groups of up to 24 people. The nightly charges are £15 per person for groups of 1-5 £12 per person for groups of 6-13 £8 per person for 14+

For further information telephone (01588) 638234.

www.forestcottages.com
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Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages
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More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.

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LA ROCCO SELF-CATERING APARTMENTS
Offering panoramic views over St Ouens Bay. New apartments with disabled facilities, accommodating 2-8 persons.

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website: <http://jerseyisland.com/stbrelade/laarocco>

• Recruitment (on pages 41 to 46)

Coalition of Disabled People - Birmingham
Directing our Destiny as Equals



The Coalition is a new and exciting organisation of Disabled People in Birmingham. Disability led, based on The Social Model of Disability, we are looking to appoint workers to the posts of

Development Worker & Co-ordinator

The salaries for both posts will be between £20-25K.

Applications are invited from Disabled People who feel they could positively contribute to the future development of the Coalition and work constructively in a vibrant and challenging environment.

For more information, please contact

Cassie James
The Coalition of Disabled People - Birmingham
69, Aston Rd North, Birmingham, B6 1AH
Tel: 0776 0201088
E-mail: codpb100_recruit@yahoo.co.uk

Closing date for applications Friday 4th May 2001

This information and further details can be made available in a range of accessible formats.

THE BIBINI CENTRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

PO Address: Bibini Centre, PO Box 30, Manchester M16 8RR

The Bibini Centre for Young People developed out of the work of the Manchester Black and In Care Group. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

We have developed a range of innovative Projects in Manchester, which offer alternative residential and community based services to African, Asian, Caribbean, Black British and Black young people of mixed parentage and their families.

The Bibini Centre provides extensive induction and ongoing training courses. There is a Group Personal Pension Plan into which the Bibini Centre pays 5% of salary after completing one year's service. Annual leave entitlement is 25 working days.

The following vacancies currently exist in the various Bibini Projects. Section 5(2)(d) of the Race Relations Act 1976 applies to all posts.

Disability Project Worker

Half-time - 17.5 hours per week
Salary Scale 6 - Points 26-29 pro rata to £17,220-£19,101 per annum
Post funded by Northern Rock to 30 September 2002

The successful candidate will be a disabled person (not necessarily registered), who has experience of working with young people. The project worker will understand the importance of self-determination for disabled young people and will be able to act as an advocate. They will be committed to working with Black young people and their families in the community and will have a commitment to empowering and providing appropriate support to Black disabled young people who are in the care system.

Closing Date: 17 April 2001, Interview Date: 26 April 2001

Asian Project Worker

Full-time - 35 hours per week
Salary Scale 6 - Points 26-29 £17,220-£19,101
Post funded by National Lottery Charities Board to 30 September 2002

This post is suitable for an enthusiastic dynamic individual who understands the importance of Asian Young People advocating on their own behalf and feeling that they have a voice. The successful person will be an Asian worker who speaks Urdu/Punjabi/Gujarati. The post holder will provide direct support to Asian young people and their families, operating from a holistic and child centred way.

Closing Date: 17 April 2001, Interview Date: 24 April 2001

Family Placement Social Worker

17.5 hours per week
Salary SO1/SO2 pro rata to £19,101-£22,194
Post funded to 30 September 2002

The Family Support Service provides support to young people and their families who are considered to be in need or who are experiencing social exclusion. The project offers a wide range of services, while each worker takes a lead in various areas of the work. The Bibini Centre is aiming to recruit volunteer carers to offer respite placements for black children and young people. This post is suitable for an experienced social worker with two years family support experience, who is enthusiastic and committed to recruiting, training, and supporting a diverse range of carers for Black young people. The post holder will provide direct support to carers, devise training and monitor placements. This post will enable a fresh approach to the needs of Black young people.

Closing Date: 23 April 2001, Interview Date: 30 April 2001

For application packs on all posts write to the Bibini Centre, PO Box 30, Manchester M16 8RR, or fax on 0161 882 0420, or e-mail: information@bibinicentre.fsnet.co.uk - Contact name: Sharon Dayle.

• Holidays

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Enjoy a relaxing holiday in self catering properties thoughtfully designed and managed by caring owners. For further details tel: 01728 685358 fax: 01728 685011, e-mail: gclarke@telinco.co.uk web: <http://freespace.virgin.net/r.neall/index.htm>

WYE VALLEY Specialising in Holidays for Disabled People
Glorious valley & river views, 3 acre gardens, 3 lounges & conservatory. T.V./Radio all rooms. Menu choices. Physio, hairdresser.

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Activities, entertainment. Rates from £300/week. (01594) 530581 for brochure etc.
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ACCESS ABILITY LOTHIAN

A disability-led organisation, working to promote educational inclusion

MANAGER (Ref. MAN/01/1)

Salary P01 (SCP 35-38) £23,430-£25,476
Experienced manager required to manage a small staff team and move the organisation forward.
Closing date: 25 April, Interviews: 10 May

ADMINISTRATOR (Ref. AD/01/1)

Salary AP3/4 (SCP 25-27) £17,232-£20,397
Experienced person required to organise and provide administrative, clerical and book-keeping support.
Closing date: 9 May, Interviews: 23 May

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE/DEVELOPMENT WORKER (Ref. EDUC/01/1)

Salary AP4/5 (SCP 28-33) £18,984-£22,317
Post-holder will promote inclusive education through guidance, networking and general development work. Education/guidance qualification desirable.
Closing date: 23 May, Interviews: 7 June

- no CVs
- all information available in accessible formats
- applications from disabled people particularly welcome

Details from: Access Ability Lothian, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY. Tel: 0131 475 2300. Minicom: 0131 475 2300.
E-mail: AAL@accability.demon.co.uk

ASPIRE (Association for Spinal Injury Research Rehabilitation and Reintegration) works with people with spinal cord injury and the wider disabled community in the UK to create opportunity, choice and independence.

Head of fundraising and marketing
£30-34K

You will head up a team of 3 full-time and 2 part-time staff and a dozen volunteers. You will manage a diverse range of fundraising activities and develop a fundraising strategy to increase income from the current £500K pa. You will develop and implement ASPIRE's marketing strategy. As a member of ASPIRE's senior management team you will be actively involved in determining the future direction of the organisation. The post is based at our fully accessible and integrated leisure and training centre in Stanmore, Middlesex.

To be a successful candidate you will have a minimum of 4 years diverse experience in fundraising, and 2 years management experience. Understanding of sport and/or disability would be an advantage.

Please send a c.v. with a covering letter explaining why you are suited for the job to Kim Boughton, Administrator, ASPIRE, ASPIRE National Training Centre, Wood Lane, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4AP, or by email to kimb@aspire.org.uk

See www.aspire.org.uk or ring Kim on 020 8420 6707 (textphone 020 8420 6501) for a job description and further information.

Closing date: 11 April 2001. First interviews: 18 April 2001



Aspire

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Do you have:
a desire to uphold people's rights, common sense, the ability to make a commitment to another individual?

Do you want:
to make a difference to someone else's life, a chance to develop skills and experience, free training, on-going support?

People just like you can make a real difference, by giving a few hours on a regular basis to support others to have a voice. Citizen Advocates have a one-to-one relationship with another person, who may have learning and physical disabilities.

For information call Advocacy Partners 020 8770 8303
Email orchard.hill@advocacypartners.org.uk

• Recruitment (on pages 41 to 46)

Disability Development Worker

east midlands
arts
making creative opportunities

(18 months, fixed term contract)
£21,585 to £27,462 pro-rata for period of service

East Midlands Arts wishes to appoint a development worker (fixed term) in the field of disability and the arts. The job will involve developing opportunities for disabled people in the arts as artists, audiences and participants. The development worker will identify areas in this field, which require funding and support, and establish programmes to bring this about. They will also respond to enquiries, and establish networks of relevant contacts. A main task of the job will be the recruitment, training and support of an apprenticeship for a disabled person. The job is particularly suited to a disabled person with experience of employment or self-employment in the arts, to whom full access support will be offered.

For details and an application pack, send an A4 SAE (with 41p stamp), to: **Jobs - Disability Development Worker, East Midlands Arts, Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 0QE.** Alternatively you may receive the details by e-mail if you contact liz.dunajewska@em-arts.co.uk

Closing date is 20 April with interviews on 3 May. No CVs.

East Midlands Arts is the Regional Arts Board for Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland, promoting the arts, supporting professional artists and overseeing government and Lottery funding in the arts sector. EMA is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and from people with disabilities.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Association of Disabled Professionals (ADP)

A disabled entrepreneur's network is the first of what we hope will be a number of networks managed by disabled people for disabled people on various issues of employment. We have funding from the Small Business Service's Phoenix Development fund to set up the network.

Consultant to Research & Develop

- Are you a disabled person who:
- "communicates and networks" well, particularly with other disabled people and agencies?
 - has extensive knowledge of self-employment and other business issues?
 - can meet deadlines?
 - can write and advise on policies?

If you are and you have enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the removal of barriers within society which disabled people face, particularly in employment, you may be just the person we are looking for to plan, research and develop the network on a consultancy basis.

For a copy of the consultant's brief, contact the Association of Disabled Professionals, tel: 020 8778 5008, fax: 020 8778 3599, email: AssDisProf@aol.com, giving name, address and the format you need (standard, large print, disk, email).

Closing date: 20 April 2001
Interviews for consultant: 17 May 2001

ADP strives for equality of opportunity in all it does



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You will be a highly motivated self-starter, be proactive, have exceptional communication skills, as well as the ability to close.

Please apply in writing along with your C.V. to:

Chris Pedersen, Personnel Manager, Ashdale Healthcare, Dale House, Armytage Road, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 1PT.



ASHDALE
HEALTHCARE

Research & Planning Analysts

Research & Modelling - Integration

Victoria

The Integration Department, which provides high-level policy advice and analysis for Transport for London and its operational divisions, now requires additional analysts to work on a variety of research and planning projects.

We currently have analytical vacancies across the Department at a number of levels dependent on qualifications and experience. Exposure to transport economics, datasets, GIS, and multi-media appraisal tools would be an advantage for some of the posts, but is not essential.

The work requires enthusiasm, good communication skills and common sense. You will need to be self-motivated and able to deal with people at all levels within Transport for London and its operational divisions. You will work accurately under pressure to deliver timely responses to complex, sometimes loosely defined, queries

c.£29,000

Research Analyst

Your experience might include the specification and management of surveys and research projects, and the validation, analysis and interpretation of survey data. Good numerical, analytical and statistical skills will be required. Good working knowledge of statistical software, such as SPSS or SAS is desirable. Ref: TFL72/D

c.£24,000

Planning Analyst

Your experience might include the validation, analysis and interpretation of complex datasets and model outputs; or the collation and interpretation of information from diverse sources in order to arrive at sound conclusions. Ref: TFL73/D

c.£24,000 & c.£29,000

Transport Modelling and Appraisal

Experience in the application of complex models in the appraisal of transport schemes and policy initiatives will be essential. Knowledge of the emme/2 or TRIPS software packages would be an advantage, as well as an interest in new developments in modelling techniques and their application to practical problems.

For the more senior vacancies in these areas we are looking for individuals with significant experience of transport model development combined with a proven track record in project management and procurement of services through specialist consultants. Ref: TFL74/D

c.£24,000

Geographical Information Systems

In addition to your general numerical and analytical ability you will have experience and interest in the use of desktop GIS for complex analysis. This role involves end user support and training and some data management responsibilities

We would be happy to hear from recent graduates but ideally you will have a minimum of one year's relevant work or research experience. For appointment at the more senior levels you will have a minimum of three years' experience and be able to demonstrate project management skills. Ref: TFL77/D

To apply for these positions, please telephone 020 7941 4436 or email hrcorporate@tfl.gov.uk for an application form. Closing date for applications is 12 April 2001. It is anticipated that interviews will be held week commencing 30 April.

Transport for London is working towards equality in employment and service delivery and welcomes applications from all people representative of London's diverse communities.

Transport for London

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE NHS TRUST AND GEORGE ELIOT HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

Disability Training Officer

£23,172 pa
Two Year Funded Post
Full Time, Part Time or Job Share

You will be primarily responsible for designing and delivering training to support implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act in the two Trusts. North Warwickshire NHS Trust provides a range of community based health services including mental health and learning disability services. The George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust provides acute hospital services on its site in Nuneaton.

The job will entail developing a programme of disability awareness training for staff and developing best practice in communication with patients. You will be directly involved in the delivery of training as well as co-ordinating input from local disability groups and external trainers. This work is part of a larger equalities agenda being undertaken by both Trusts. We are actively seeking applications from people with personal experience of disability. You will have substantial experience of designing and delivering training, comprehensive knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act and be able to demonstrate a good understanding of the range and complexity of health care provision.

For an informal discussion please telephone Christine Trethowan on (024) 7664 2200 or Frank Keogh on (024) 7686 5286.

A job description and application form are available from Amanda Salt, Equalities Department, North Warwickshire NHS Trust, The Manor, Manor Court Avenue, Nuneaton CV11 5HX. Tel: (024) 7637 0028.

Closing date for applications: 30th April 2001.

Both Trusts meet the criteria to use the Employment Service disability symbol and guarantee an interview to disabled applicants meeting the requirements of the person specification.



• Holidays

Near Salisbury - newly converted stable block self-catering units. Ground floor 1 double/twin bedroom en-suite wheel-in shower. Upstairs 1 double, 1 single, shower room. Open plan kitchen & living room. Patio & shared garden. ETB category 2, 4-star highly commended. Non-smoking. Prices from £195 pw. Available all year. Tel: 01722 349002 e-mail: mail@old-stables.co.uk, www.old-stables.co.uk

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Brittany Cottage to let. Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details **C. Hodgson**. Tel (01924) 499220.

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Sleeps 4, fabulous views, flawless luxury. TV, linen, power all included.
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Accessibility Grade 1



Continued on page 44

Is your Employer Leading the Way?

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worked for an employer who:

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- ◆ Gave you good training?
- ◆ Gave you encouragement and the right sort of support?

Then why not put their
name forward for the
Remploy Leading the Way
Awards?

Putting them forward as an example:

- ◆ Gives them the recognition they deserve
- ◆ Encourages other employers to do the same
- ◆ Creates job opportunities for people with disabilities

Tanni Grey-Thompson OBE, will present the 2001 Remploy Leading the Way Awards and Commendations on 11th July 2001, at the Motorcycle Museum in Solihull.

We welcome nominations from people with disabilities, employers and support organisations. A disabled employee must support all nominations.



A prospectus and entry form is available from: Christine Manning, Leading the Way Award Co-ordinator, Remploy Limited, Britannia Road, Banbury OX16 5DP

Telephone: 0800 328 2820

Facsimile: 01295 274960

E-mail: christine.manning@remploy.co.uk

Website: www.remploy.co.uk

Closing date for this year's competition: 31st May 2001

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• Holidays

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Fax: 00 351 289 397448 E-mail: dave@player.pt

www.player.pt

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Cosy/well equipped lakeside lodges (2 b'room). Idyllic, peaceful & wonderful nature. Wheelchair friendly lodge and walks around lake & private nature reserve.

Free use of wheely boat. Great fly fishing.

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www.the-tranquil-otter.co.uk

01228 576661

Blagdon Farm Country Holidays Devon/Cornwall border

Superb, south-facing, wheelchair accessible luxury bungalows overlooking lake and set within 38 acres of glorious countryside. Many on-site facilities including indoor heated pool. Take-away meals delivered and equipment loan available. Tourist Board Highly Commended.

For colour brochure please contact: Pauline and Tony Blight, Blagdon Farm, Ashwater, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5DF. Phone: 01409 211509. Fax 01409 211510.

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Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service.

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(01208) 850277 or 850617

FREELANCE WRITER

Fee: £2,500

"Equal Opportunities Policy into Practice: Disability"

ITC, the management association for performing arts organisations, is seeking to engage a writer for the next in its series of publications;

"Equal Opportunities Policy into Practice: Disability".

The successful applicant will have journalistic experience as well as a knowledge and understanding of disability issues and current relevant legislation.



For further details:

Will Forrest on 020 7403 6698 or w.forrest@itc-arts.org

Closing date for applications: Monday 9th April 2001

Breakthrough UK Ltd is an exciting and successful company delivering training and employment support to disabled people and employers. We follow the social model of disability, and support the principles of Independent Living whilst recognising employment opportunity as a major issue for disabled people.

We are looking to recruit a committed and enthusiastic disabled person, with the right experience, to the post of

TRAINER IN DISABILITY ISSUES

POST REFERENCE: BUK TDI 1

Salary negotiable (in the range of £20,000)

The Job:

You will provide training to staff and customers of Breakthrough UK, including disabled people, and their employers and assist in creation of a resources library.

The person:

You will not necessarily have any formal teaching or training qualifications, but will need to show a commitment to our mission, as well as a wide range of experience in designing and delivering training on disability issues. You will be highly motivated, able to work on your own or in a team, and possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

For an application pack please contact:

Yvonne Pridding-Bell

Breakthrough UK Ltd

BEVC

Aked Close,

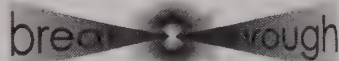
Ardwick

Manchester M12 4AN

Details available on disc and in electronic format

Closing date for applications Monday 23 April.

Interviews will be held week commencing 7 May.



Southampton Centre for Independent Living

an organisation run and controlled by disabled people, wish to recruit a mental health system survivor, following the successful award of an initial two-year contract awarded as part of a national pilot scheme for mental health system survivors using direct payments.

We are able to offer a flexible package with options for support to enable you to fully realise your potential within a welcoming, empowering environment. You will have the opportunity to make a real difference to other disabled peoples' lives, coupled with an initial two-year contract. This post will enable you to work closely with Mental Health System Survivors who are committed to the principles of independent living in their daily lives.

Direct Payments Support Worker

17.5 hrs/wk, £19,101 (pro rata, pay award pending)

An exciting opportunity to support, train, inform and advise mental health system survivors in the Hampshire area to organise their own personal assistance arrangements through the use of direct payments. The successful applicant will have the ability to travel unaided or with assistance. A training and induction package will enable you to develop your skills. You will have a secured contract until April 2003, including 25 days leave per year and a pension scheme.

SCIL is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity. We particularly welcome applications from disabled people who are also members of minority groups. All posts are open to job share.

For application packs, or an informal chat, please contact Berni Vincent, Independent Living Team Leader, SCIL, 6 Northlands Road, Southampton SO15 2LF, tel: 023 8033 0982, text: 023 8063 5167, fax: 023 8022 5060, e-mail: berni@southamptoncil.demon.co.uk Application closing date is 27 April 2001.

worcestershire
Lifestyles

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

£19,000 - £21,000

To lead and manage a developing Charity supporting the choice, independence and social inclusion of disabled adults in Worcestershire.

For further information/application pack contact Cora Jones on 01905 350686, fax 01905 350684, minicom 01905 350635, e-mail worcslifestyles@care4free.net

Woodside Lodge, Lark Hill Road, Worcester, WR5 2EF.

Registered Charity No. 1068883

BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ACCESS OFFICER

Ref No: F109

£21,585 - £25,419 p.a.

Based in one of the main south coast cities, situated next to the New Forest, you will be helping in developing and co-ordinating the city council's policies and obligations for compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

You should have good communication and IT skills to help deliver presentations and maintain records whilst having the ability to work within a team.

A sound knowledge of construction is

required in order to survey premises, give guidance, advise on planning applications and assist with Building Regulation submissions.

Ideally, you should have a building construction related degree, with a minimum of two years' post-qualification experience and a working knowledge of the DDA. Project management skills would be an advantage.

Relocation allowance will be paid in appropriate cases.

Closing date: 17 April 2001.

Interview date: w/c 30 April 2001.



This job is open to job-share. We have a positive approach to Equal Opportunities and encourage applications from all sections of the community. All council offices are designated non-smoking areas. Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria will be interviewed.

An Application Form, Job Description and Person Specification is available from Directorate of Community Services, Southampton City Council, PO Box 933, Southampton SO14 7BD. Telephone (023) 8083 2541 (answerphone out of office hours). Please telephone (023) 8083 2575 if you are a hearing impaired caller and have access to a Minicom. All applications must be submitted on an official application form. CVs will not be considered. See our CityWeb site at www.southampton.gov.uk



CHOICES & RIGHTS

disability coalition

Registered Charity No: 1046394 Company Ltd by Guarantee.
Registered in England No: 3982194

Choices and Rights are a well-established organisation run and controlled by disabled people. We are currently looking to recruit disabled people into the following full time (35 hours) posts:

Access Worker starting at £17 220 + 7% contributory pension

The postholder will:

- Provide access audits, advice, consultancy and training to/ working with a variety of organisations/bodies in the Hull area.
- Recruit, train and manage disabled volunteers to work on the project.

Disability Equality Training Co-ordinator starting at £19101 + 7% contributory pension

The post holder will:

- Develop promote and deliver a range of disability equality training.
- Provide advice and consultancy on disability equality issues to a wide range of organisations in the Hull area.
- Recruit, train and manage disabled volunteers to work on the project.

Both post holders will have a sound knowledge of current disability issues and an understanding and ability to work within the Social Model of Disability. The ability to work on your own initiative and as part of a team is essential.

Only disabled people need apply. Closing date for applications: 20 April 2001.

For further details and an application pack please send an A4 SAE to:

Choices and Rights Disability Coalition, Arthur Richardson Centre, Savoy Road, Hull, HU8 OTX. Telephone/Fax: 01482 788668. To discuss these posts informally contact Mark Baggeley on 01482 336104. If you require information in a different format, please let us know.



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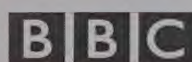
BBC News

Sponsorship Scheme 2001

You're starting training in broadcast journalism, but think the BBC isn't for you? Then think again. This could be the start of a rewarding relationship. Following the success of last year's scheme, we are again sponsoring nine talented students who will be embarking on an accredited postgraduate diploma course in Broadcast Journalism this year. To gain a sponsorship, you will need to have demonstrable potential journalism skills such as editorial awareness and the ability to tell a story. Excellent communication and team working qualities are also essential for a successful career in journalism.

We will pay your course fees, make a contribution to your living expenses and offer up to five weeks work experience in BBC Network News. You'll also have a BBC News Mentor - a senior editorial figure to guide you along the way.

For details of the scheme, including a list of accredited courses, contact us online at www.bbc.co.uk/e49056.shtml or at: BBC Recruitment Services by April 20th (quoting ref.49056/DI and giving your name and address). Tel: 020 8740 0005. Textphone: 020 8225 9878. E-mail: nss@bbc.co.uk Closes: April 27th.



Working for equality of opportunity

WILTSHIRE LAW CENTRE

EMPLOYMENT LAW CASEWORKER

We are seeking an enthusiastic and motivated Employment Law Caseworker (17.5 hours per week) to join our busy staff team. The successful applicant will have a good knowledge of employment law and at least one year's paid or unpaid experience of advice giving, as well as a commitment to social inclusion.

Salary £20,967-£22,194 pro rata (Pt. 32-34 NJC scale)

for an application pack please contact

**Wiltshire Law Centre, Temple House,
115-118 Commercial Road, Swindon SN1 5PL
Tel: 01793 486926 Fax: 01793 432193
E-mail: wiltslawcentre@dial.pipex.com**

Application packs are available in alternative formats.

Closing date 20 April

Interview date 11 May

Wiltshire Law Centre strives to be an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from Black, Asian and disabled people who are currently under-represented among the staff.

The Law Centre operates as a non-hierarchical collective.

Conditions

All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Richard Gresham (tel: 020 7619 7336) or Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see above).

DN cannot except responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

Disability Now is not responsible for claims made in the advertisements it prints and all readers are advised to check claims with the advertisers before relying on them.

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Web: www.paydayservices.co.uk**



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PHYSIOTHERAPY

Birkdale Clinic: my practice has a relaxed and tranquil atmosphere. The aim of the treatment, which comes about as a result of co-operation between myself, as the therapist, and the patients, is to empower, encourage and motivate the person to regain their confidence and awareness of their body. Call Mrs Bondarenko, **Tel: 020 8998 9403**

Look at the difference

If you're looking for an employer that really values you as an individual, congratulations - you've found one. At Barking and Dagenham, we're positive about diversity, because we know our mixture of cultures, ages, levels of ability and gender actually strengthens our team. And by reflecting the makeup of our community, we'll be better able to provide sensitive, relevant and accessible services to meet its needs.

We're proud of our past, and see it as an outstanding foundation; but we think that modernising initiatives such as this can only help us to build an exciting future. A major

part of that future will be local community development, boosted by the energy and resources of the Council. Enthusiastically tackling best value, we're building successful partnerships with the community, the private sector and colleague agencies in the public sector. There's never been a more exciting time to join us.

We're regularly recruiting across the board. To find out more about us and the roles we have on offer, visit us at www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk. Opportunities to join us are also advertised in local, national or trade press, as well as at local job centres.

The London Borough of
Barking & Dagenham
WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Best Value Inspectors

East and West Midlands + East Anglia
£31-£42,000 based on experience and expertise



In April 2000 the Government placed a duty of Best Value on Local Government services. To facilitate this the Audit Commission established the Best Value Inspection Service who have now embarked on an extensive programme to act as a catalyst for improvement and excellence in Public Services. Delivering Best Value Inspection services across England and Wales, their work will inform local people of the quality of public services and also identify the appropriate improvement agenda for that area, recognising the weaknesses balanced against the strengths. Much of the success in meeting these objectives will be dependent on the exceptional qualities of Best Value Inspectors.

To succeed in these roles, you will need a proven track record in project management, and managing change. Your strong evaluative and analytical skills enable you to examine complex information, produce solutions and deliver results to a strict timescale. Your strong communication skills will allow you to establish and develop positive relationships that will generate confidence and respect.

No one Inspectors background or skills are the same, there are opportunities both for service managers and individuals seeking to extend their career profile through a unique experience in a national organisation. Whether a service or corporate background you are likely to have had exposure to one or more of: Cultural Services - arts, libraries and tourism; Environmental Services - planning, construction and waste management; Corporate Services - procurement and IT.

The organisation's commitment to staff development ensures that motivated individuals seeking to further develop their personal skills and career will be supported and encouraged to progress in these high profile roles. With an inspection workload across the region, flexible arrangements apply, including home working with exceptional facilities and support.

Applications from members of ethnic minority groups, women and people with disabilities are welcomed.

To apply please send your cv and salary details to Sharon Burns or Heather Clarke, Hays Executive, St Philips Gate, 3-6 Waterloo Street, Birmingham B2 5PG. Tel: 0121 633 4383. Fax: 01279 642016. Email: zoe.smith@hays-ap.com
An information pack is available on request.

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CONTACT

Support Service, run by and for disabled people, requires a

Disabled Trainer
17½ hours a week
Salary: £9,550

To coordinate and deliver our volunteer training courses. Post funded for one year.

Application packs available from 17-21 Chapel Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 5DT. Please state what format you require: standard print, large print, audio cassette or Braille.

Closing date: Friday 27 April
Interviews: 8-9 May 2001

• Personal

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Introduction Agency

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Employment Support for Disabled People

The Employment Service can provide employment and job retention advice to disabled people who are facing additional employment barriers associated with their disability.

Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) can provide:

- employment assessment
- job seeking advice and support
- information on specialist employment programmes for disabled people
- advice on remaining in work

For more information get in touch with your local Jobcentre



**Employment
Service**



2001
Classified deadlines for
the May issue:
Booking deadline is
12 April
Copy deadline is
17 April

Win!

Put the spark in your wardrobe

Suits you: Simply walk in to your local M&S, try on your chosen outfit, and it's yours. It's as simple as that!



Can you imagine a visit to your local department store where you help yourself to a brand new formal outfit and exit without paying a penny for it?

To mark this month's work fashion feature (pages 24-25), M&S are allowing two lucky DN readers to do exactly that.

What is more, our shoppers can rest assured that there will be no in-store detective hot on their heels!

From undergarments to shoes and overcoats, our winners (a man and a woman) will be assisted by an M&S representative from their region in selecting a fabulous new

MARKS & SPENCER

outfit from their spring/summer collection and there will be no queuing at the till to pay for any of it.

Shopping doesn't get any more pleasurable than this, so for a chance to get suited and booted and make a big impression, complete your name and address on the form top right and clear some space in your wardrobe.

Win!

Cycle away with Cyclone

For those of you who missed the March issue's cycling supplement, you still have time

to enter the fabulous Cyclone competition.

And with summer on the way, what better than to win a



Cyclone Tracker handcycle (left), worth £1,300?

The Tracker has a cycle section and an adapter, which connects it to your wheelchair – don't worry – there's an adapter for every type of chair, and as it fits underneath it won't get in the way when you're not cycling.

The cycle section is height and depth adjustable for comfortable fit, and can be attached whilst sitting in your wheelchair.

With seven speeds as standard, you could soon be whizzing along at 15km an hour.

For your chance to win, simply fill out the entry form top right.

For more information about the Cyclone range, tel: 0700 292 56663 or visit their website at www.cyclone-mf.co.uk

TO ENTER

Tick your chosen competition circle(s) below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

☐ M&S

☐ Bike



TERMS & CONDITIONS

• Closing date for both offers: 30.4.2001 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • This is a joint partnership with Marks & Spencer and Cyclone and we may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your name and address to be included ☐

DN next month



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All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 30 April.

ELECTION 2001

Before you vote, find out what the main political parties are promising disabled people and their families.

EATING DISORDERS

DN looks at different problems and how to solve them.

HOW TO...

Keep yourself safe in and out of the house.

GARDENING

Time to get out the trowel and the gardening gloves. Ideas, advice and a preview of the Chelsea Flower Show.

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VW Transporter, 2.5 Auto '99	£16,500

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The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

Big money £560m for learning disability



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Jobs

p41-46 and on our website: www.disabilitynow.org.uk